

The Craggy Island Trail: Development of a Transmedia Storytelling Experience for Irish Film Tourism

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Resumo

Na cultura contemporânea, a narrativa estende-se por múltiplos meios e plataformas, convidando audiências cada vez mais participativas. Embora amplamente utilizada no entretenimento, a narrativa transmédia continua pouco explorada no contexto do turismo cinematográfico. Este estudo, baseado numa metodologia de Investigação Baseada em Design (Design-Based Research – DBR), examina de que forma esta abordagem pode enriquecer experiências orientadas pela narrativa e promover o envolvimento emocional no turismo cinematográfico irlandês.

A tese envolveu o desenvolvimento do *The Craggy Island Trail*¹, um protótipo móvel que integra elementos transmédia para guiar os utilizadores por locais reais associados à série *Father Ted*, recolhendo simultaneamente dados qualitativos sobre o envolvimento narrativo, ligação emocional, usabilidade e funcionalidade multimédia.

A investigação baseou-se no contributo de dois grupos focais: profissionais de design multimédia e potenciais utilizadores familiarizados com *Father Ted* e com interesse em turismo. As sessões foram orientadas pelo modelo Design, Dinâmicas e Experiência (DDE) e pela Escala de Envolvimento Narrativo (NES), sendo os dados analisados tematicamente. Os contributos obtidos informaram o desenvolvimento iterativo do protótipo, que resultou numa aplicação capaz de prolongar a narrativa ficcional num contexto turístico real na Irlanda.

O estudo conclui que a narrativa transmédia, quando adaptada ao contexto e à experiência do utilizador, potencia a imersão emocional e o envolvimento narrativo no turismo cinematográfico. Contribui para a investigação emergente sobre media interativos no turismo e oferece orientações práticas para integrar narrativa, lugar e tecnologia no design de experiências turísticas culturais.

Palavras-chave: turismo cinematográfico, narrativa transmédia, media interativos no turismo, design centrado no utilizador, envolvimento narrativo, investigação baseada em design, design de narrativa interativa, investigação baseada em design (DBR), media interativos

¹ *The Craggy Island Trail* pode ser acedido em: <https://pothole95.github.io/Father-Ted-App/>

Abstract

In contemporary culture, storytelling spans multiple media and platforms, inviting increasingly participatory audiences. While widely used in entertainment, transmedia storytelling remains under-explored in film tourism. This Design-Based Research (DBR) study examines how it can enhance narrative-driven experiences and emotional engagement in Irish film tourism. The thesis involved developing *The Craggy Island Trail*², a mobile prototype integrating transmedia elements to guide users through real-world locations from the Father Ted series, while gathering qualitative insights into narrative engagement, emotional connection, usability, and multimedia functionality.

The research drew feedback from two focus groups: multimedia design professionals and potential users familiar with Father Ted and tourism. Sessions were guided by the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) Framework and the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES), with thematic analysis applied. Insights informed iterative development, resulting in a prototype that extended fiction into a real-world Irish tourism context.

The study concludes that transmedia storytelling, when tailored to context and experience, enhances emotional immersion and narrative engagement in film tourism. It contributes to emerging scholarship in interactive tourism media and offers practical guidance for integrating story, place, and technology in cultural tourism design.

Keywords: film-tourism, transmedia storytelling, interactive tourism media, user-centred design, narrative engagement, design-based research, interactive storytelling design, design-based research (DBR), interactive media

² *The Craggy Island Trail* can be accessed at: <https://pothole95.github.io/Father-Ted-App/>

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List of Acronyms

AR	Augmented Reality
DBR	Design-Based Research
DDE	Design Dynamics Experience
GPS	Global Positioning System
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NES	Narrative Engageability Scale
PWA	Progressive Web Application
SD	Standard Deviation
TA	Thematic Analysis
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

Glossary

- **Audiovisual Integration** - This term refers to the coordinated use of visual and auditory media within this study's prototype application.
- **Augmented Reality (AR)** - A technology that overlays digital information, such as images, sounds, or interactive features, onto the real-world environment.
- **Cultural Resonance** - In this study, cultural resonance refers to the degree to which users perceive a meaningful connection between content and cultural identity.
- **Emotional Engagement** - In this study, emotional engagement captures the depth and quality of affective responses elicited by the narrative content, including empathy, nostalgia, and humour.
- **End User** - An individual who interacts with the final version of a product.
- **Focus Group** - A research method involving guided group discussions to collect diverse perspectives on a specific topic.
- **Gamification** - The application of gamified elements, such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, to non-game contexts.
- **Gamified Elements** - Gamified elements refer to features drawn from game design, such as milestones, rewards, and progress indicators.
- **Global Positioning System (GPS)** - A satellite-based navigation system that enables the determination of precise geographic locations.
- **Interactive Media** - Digital platforms or applications that allow users to actively participate in, influence, or shape the content and narrative.
- **Iterative Development** - A cyclical process of prototyping, testing, analysing, and refining a product or system.
- **Location-Based Services** - Digital services that use geographic data from a user's device to deliver content or functionality tailored to their current location.

- **Multimedia Professional** - A professional with expertise in the design, production, and evaluation of digital content across media formats, including video, audio, graphics, and interactive platforms.
- **Narrative Coherence** - Narrative coherence refers to the logical consistency, clarity, and structural integrity of a story across media and spatial elements.
- **Narrative Engageability** - Narrative engageability refers to users' emotional and cognitive investment in a story.
- **Narrative Layering** - Narrative layering involves adding multiple layers of meaning, perspectives, or narratives to a single story.
- **Narrative Transportation** - Narrative transportation is defined as the psychological process through which users become immersed in a story world.
- **Participatory Design** - A design methodology that actively involves stakeholders, especially end users, in the design process to ensure the final product meets their needs and expectations.
- **Prototype** - An early, functional version of a digital product developed to test concepts, features, and usability before final implementation.
- **Qualitative Analysis** - A research approach focused on interpreting non-numerical data, such as interview transcripts or observational notes.
- **Quantitative Analysis** - The systematic examination of numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, or statistical significance.
- **Stakeholder** - Any individual or group with an interest in the development, implementation, or outcomes of a project.
- **Stylistic Fidelity** - The degree to which the design and content of a digital application remain consistent with the visual and thematic style of the original media property.
- **Telepresence Theory** - refers to the concept of creating a sense of being present in a virtual environment.
- **Thematic Analysis** - A method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data.
- **Tourism Motivation** – This term refers to the desire to visit real-world locations as the direct result of a stimulus.
- **Transmedia Storytelling** - Transmedia storytelling refers to the practice of conveying narrative elements across multiple platforms and formats.
- **Usability** - The extent to which a digital product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals effectively, efficiently, and satisfactorily in a given context.
- **User-Directed Exploration** - This term refers to the ability of users to navigate and experience narrative content based on personal choices, including the order, pace, and path of interaction.
- **User Experience (UX)** - The overall experience and satisfaction a user derives from interacting with a digital product, encompassing usability, accessibility, emotional response, and perceived value.

Introduction

Film tourism has evolved into a dynamic component of global tourism, where screen media stimulates interest in real-world locations. This trend reflects a growing desire among audiences to engage with narrative worlds that they enjoy, transforming fictional or dramatised settings into meaningful tourist destinations.

In the Irish context, this is particularly relevant, as *Star Wars* fans flock to western Ireland, and *Game of Thrones* has had a similar effect on Northern Ireland, where sites such as Tollymore Forest have gained global recognition (Donald, 2019).

However, this isn't new territory for Ireland, as the Emerald Isle has witnessed *The Quiet Man* (1952) elevate Cong, County Mayo into a cultural pilgrimage site for international visitors, prompting political recognition of film tourism's potential, as noted in the Seanad Éireann (2006), the film significantly expanded Ireland's international profile.

Interactivity and the integration of narrative structures in the visitor journey are increasingly seen as important elements of film tourism practice. This reflects a wider cultural shift in media consumption, where audiences seek more active, participatory modes of engagement.

The term "film tourist," explored by scholars such as Buchmann et al. (2010), characterises individuals whose travel motivations are shaped by audiovisual narratives. This concept supports the view that the tourist experience is increasingly bound to emotional and narrative associations with media. Consequently, the role of digital tools in enhancing these associations deserves further investigation, particularly in relation to location-based storytelling and interactive technologies.

This study addresses these concerns by exploring how interactive multimedia applications can enhance narrative engagement and visitor experience at Irish film tourism locations. It takes the Irish television series *Father Ted* (1995-1998) as its narrative anchor and investigates how transmedia storytelling can be adapted to cultural tourism. The research centres on the development and evaluation of a prototype application, *The Craggy Island Trail*, which serves as a research tool designed to unfold a digital narrative across real-world locations.

This study employs a Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology, as described by McKenney and Reeves (2019), chosen for its capacity to develop and test design in authentic

settings. The approach is further justified by the opportunity to align research findings with existing literature, enabling cross-validation of insights.

Research Motivation and Context

This study is motivated by the increasing convergence of digital media, interactive storytelling, and tourism. As mobile technology and location-based services have become more accessible, there is a growing demand for tourism experiences that are not only informative but also immersive and narratively compelling, suggesting a shift from passive site visitation to active participation. This connection between screen narratives and real-world locations, presents an opportunity to enhance visitor engagement through transmedia design.

The persistent cultural relevance of the television series *Father Ted* illustrates how fictional narratives can continue to resonate with audiences and motivate meaningful interaction with associated locations. Despite its original broadcast concluding more than two decades ago, the series remains a recurring presence on national television in Ireland, underscoring its sustained resonance in public consciousness. Its embeddedness in Irish popular culture and the ongoing public interest in its filming locations make it an effective case through which to investigate narrative engagement in location-based digital experiences. The decision to centre the design inquiry on *Father Ted* reflects an existing readiness among visitors to engage more meaningfully with related content.

The study is situated within contemporary research that foregrounds emotional engagement and narrative immersion as central to the tourist experience. Scholars have noted the value of multimedia content in enhancing user engagement when it is constructed with narrative intent. Specifically, work in digital heritage and locative media demonstrates that such content can facilitate deeper emotional connections and a heightened sense of presence in place-based experiences (Lugmayr, et al., 2017). Building on this foundation, this research investigates design strategies that centre on emotional resonance and interactivity, guided by qualitative insights derived from focus group methodologies.

An additional motivation stems from a personal and academic interest in how media narratives shape perceptions of place. As the boundaries between physical and digital experiences continue to blur, the role of storytelling design becomes ever more crucial. This research, therefore, positions storytelling as both a structural and affective mechanism in the design of engaging tourist experiences, particularly within the domain of Irish screen heritage.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is: *How can transmedia storytelling be designed to enrich narrative-driven experience and emotional engagement in Irish film tourism?*

This question is explored through the following sub-questions:

- *What multimedia elements should be prioritised when designing an application to foster film-tourist engagement?*
- *How does transmedia storytelling influence film tourist emotional connection to the narrative experience and their overall engagement?*

Research Objectives

This research addresses the challenge of designing transmedia storytelling experiences that enhance emotional engagement and narrative immersion in Irish film tourism. With an emphasis on integrating storytelling, multimedia content, and spatial interaction, the work seeks to determine how narrative experiences might be designed to foster deeper visitor connection in film tourism contexts.

The practical outcome of the research is the design, development, and iterative evaluation of *The Craggy Island Trail*, a prototype mobile application that functions both as a public-facing storytelling tool and as an instrument of research. The application enables location-based engagement with narrative content associated with the *Father Ted* television series, using digital media to create layered, emotive experiences that unfold across real-world environments.

The study is guided by research objectives:

- Design, develop, and test a prototype of *The Craggy Island Trail* that integrates transmedia elements to guide users through real-world locations associated with the television series.
- Gather insights into user experience across the dimensions of (a) narrative engagement, (b) emotional connection, (c) usability and interaction, and (d) multimedia experience and functionality, using qualitative feedback from focus groups.

The outcome of this research is twofold: first, it identifies which multimedia and interaction design principles most effectively support emotional and narrative engagement in location-based media; second, it contributes practical insights into the application of transmedia storytelling techniques within tourism-oriented digital experiences. These findings are grounded in a synthesis of primary data and literature, contributing to broader understandings of how media design can enhance visitor participation and emotional response in film tourism contexts.

Research Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative methodology, informed by a Design-Based Research (DBR) approach. DBR, as defined by Wang and Hannafin (2005), is a systematic and flexible methodology aimed at improvement through analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration in real-world settings.

This methodology was selected due to its alignment with the dual goals of design implementation and theoretical contribution, and its capacity to evaluate artefacts in authentic settings. The development process integrates both analytical and empirical activities to examine how specific multimedia design decisions influence user engagement, emotional connection, and narrative immersion.

The study applies analytical frameworks that support structured evaluation. The NES (Narrative Engageability Scale) (Bilandzic, Sukalla, Schnell, Hastall, & Busselle, 2019) provides a model for assessing cognitive and emotional involvement in narrative experiences. Additionally, criteria drawn from the DDE (Design, Develop, Evaluate) framework (Walk, Görlich, & Barrett, 2017) inform the interpretive assessment of user interaction and emotional resonance during application prototype testing.

Prototype Development: As part of this research, the prototype web-based application, *The Craggy Island Trail* was designed and developed. The design of this tool was informed by initial insights drawn from the literature as well as iterative feedback gathered throughout the research phases. The prototype served as the central research instrument for this study.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected via two focus groups. The first group comprises design and multimedia professionals with experience with interactive technologies. The second group includes individuals with familiarity or affinity with *Father Ted* and tourism, representing the application's potential end users. These groups participated in feedback sessions centred on the application prototype. Each session focused on elements such as narrative structure, interface usability, emotional response, and multimedia content interaction.

Secondary data was gathered through an extensive review of literature in areas relevant to the project, including digital storytelling, transmedia experience design, visitor engagement, and film tourism. This informed both the structure of the application prototype and the evaluation criteria used in the empirical phases.

Data Analysis: The qualitative data collected during focus groups was processed using thematic analysis following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2012). Responses were analysed using adapted versions of the applied frameworks and coded according to categories aligned with the research questions. This process facilitated the identification of design principles with demonstrable impact on user experience, as well as areas requiring further refinement. The iterative structure of the DBR model allowed for continuous integration of findings into subsequent design phases.

Dissertation Structure

The remainder of this thesis is organised as follows:

Literature Review and Conceptual Frameworks: This chapter reviews key theoretical and applied literature in transmedia storytelling, narrative engagement, film tourism experience design, and interactive media applications. The chapter outlines the conceptual foundations of narrative-driven film tourism and identifies critical insights that inform the design and evaluation of this study's application prototype.

Methodology: This chapter describes the methodological approach used in the study. It explains the rationale for adopting a DBR model, details the phases of the research process, introduces the primary research methods, and details thematic analysis.

Findings and Outcomes of Design-Based Research Phases: This chapter presents the four developmental phases of the DBR process, from initial literature review and contextual analysis through to the iterative design and evaluation of the application prototype. It provides an account of how theoretical research and empirical findings shaped the evolving development decisions.

Discussion: This chapter interprets the findings in relation to the overarching and subsidiary research questions. It evaluates the contribution of the study in both theoretical and applied terms and broader implications for theory and practice are outlined, along with the study's methodological and practical limitations.

Conclusions: The final chapter consolidates the study's main findings, reflecting on methodological limitations, recommendations, and outlining opportunities for future research and development in the field of location-based transmedia and film tourism design.

1. Literature Review and Conceptual Frameworks

This chapter reviews literature central to the design of narrative-driven applications in the context of film tourism and outlines the conceptual frameworks underpinning this research. It draws on interdisciplinary sources to explore theoretical and applied dimensions of film tourism, transmedia storytelling, digital interactivity, and emotional engagement, while also outlining current applications, methodological approaches, and key findings.

1.1 Film Tourism

Film tourism, also referred to as film-induced or movie-induced tourism, is a phenomenon where individuals are motivated to visit destinations and attractions featured in films, television series, or other audio-visual media. As Buchmann (2010) notes, film tourism is distinguished by the relationship between media representations and physical location, with visitors often seeking authenticity and a sense of connection at sites associated with an admired depicted audiovisual work.

Beeton (2005) broadened the definition of film tourism to include not only movies but also television, videos, and other screen media, emphasising its role as both a motivator for travel and a contributor to destination image formation. The motivations behind film tourism can range from a desire to re-experience the emotions evoked by a creative work, to curiosity about the production process, or the appeal of celebrity culture.

Research highlights how film tourism can have huge impacts on locations, as seen in the case of New Zealand's association with *The Lord of the Rings*, which has transformed areas of the country, such as the town of Matata, into major attractions (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010). Additionally, the impact of film tourism is evident in the case of the Korean television drama *Winter Sonata*, which prompted a substantial increase in Japanese visitors to filming

locations in Korea, particularly Nami Island. Between 2003 and 2005, Japanese tourist arrivals rose by approximately 35 per cent, with this television series even being reported by Seongseop, Agrusa, Lee, and Chon (2007) as contributing significantly to Japanese visitors' perceptions of Korea.

1.2 Transmedia Storytelling

Transmedia storytelling forms a central theoretical and practical foundation for this research. Jenkins (2006) in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, describes transmedia storytelling as “the art of world making,” where narrative elements are dispersed across multiple media platforms, each contributing uniquely to the story's progression rather than simply reiterating content. This participatory culture blurs the traditional boundaries between producers and consumers, fostering an environment in which audiences not only consume but also share and co-create content.

Additionally, Von Stackelberg and Jones (2014), define transmedia storytelling as the process of distributing narrative content across multiple platforms, where each medium contributes uniquely to a cohesive story-world. In film tourism, this model offers a framework for visitors to access story elements through interactive digital tools such as mobile applications or augmented reality (AR).

By extending narratives beyond the screen and into the physical environment, transmedia storytelling enables a participatory mode of engagement. Visitors do not simply observe, but interact with the narrative world, often enacting roles or making choices that influence their experience. Jung and Dieck (2018), and Tussyadiah, Wang, Jung, and Dieck (2018) argue that such cross-platform engagement facilitates emotional investment and memory retention, with visitors forming personal connections through narrative reconstruction across time and space.

This dynamic can be further understood through Telepresence Theory, introduced by Lombard (2015), which conceptualises presence as the psychological state of “being there” within a mediated environment. The sense of spatial and emotional immersion is particularly relevant when designing location-based storytelling experiences. Tussyadiah et al. (2018) extend this framework to tourism, showing how embedded storylines, character encounters, and overlays can foster engagement by transforming familiar sites into narrative landscapes.

The effectiveness of transmedia storytelling in tourism settings depends not only on content delivery but also on how narratives are constructed to invite cognitive and emotional participation. This process can be described as multi-layered narrative construction. In this approach, stories are built with multiple levels, such as plotlines, varying perspectives, or stories within stories, each adding depth and complexity to the overall experience (Lee, Jung, & Kim, 2020).

Gyimóthy, Lundberg, Lindstrom, Lexhagen, and Larson, (2015) outline further that in this layered space, the visitor is both tourist and narrative actor, navigating between mediated memory and embodied experience.

This aligns with Narrative Transportation Theory, as outlined by Green (2024), which explains how individuals immersed in a story become less aware of their immediate surroundings while emotionally aligning with the narrative context. Such immersion has been shown to influence satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

Complementary to these theories is the principle of emotional design. As Volo (2021) notes, emotional design in tourism is not limited to surface aesthetics but involves structuring experiences that guide user response. In narrative applications, this may include imagery, character arcs, or visual motifs that prompt emotion like, like nostalgia. These elements serve to anchor emotional response, reinforcing memory formation and enhancing the visitor's perceived value of the experience.

Additionally, Ferreira (2015) demonstrates how transmedia content distributed across locations can enable visitors to relive moments through spatial and sensory cues. Research on transmedia storytelling in tourism further suggests that linking personal memories to narrative elements, such as specific dialogue, settings, or symbolic imagery, can enhance recall and emotional satisfaction, supporting both immediate affective responses and long-term engagement with the destination (Dionisio & Nisi, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling is fundamentally dependent on the accuracy and authenticity of its source content. Maintaining narrative coherence and fidelity to the original material is essential for building trust and emotional resonance with audiences. Inconsistent or inauthentic adaptations can disrupt the immersive experience, undermine audience engagement, and erode the credibility of the story-world (Keshavarz, 2024).

As Volo (2021) highlights, emotional design must be integrated holistically across content, interface, and interactivity. When effectively applied, it allows visitors to move beyond passive reception, encouraging active emotional participation. This approach not only aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of narrative transportation and telepresence but also contributes to the practical effectiveness of tourism applications in fostering sustained visitor engagement.

1.3 Designing Applications for Film Tourism

Building on the principles of narrative integration and emotional design, the next phase in designing transmedia applications involves the selection and implementation of appropriate mobile technologies. Application development choices influence not only the technical performance of an experience but also its capacity to support narrative engagement, emotional connection, multimedia experience and functionality, and usability and interaction.

Mobile applications are generally categorised as either native or web based. Native applications are built for specific operating systems, such as iOS or Android, and typically offer greater responsiveness, offline functionality, and deeper integration with device features such as GPS, camera, or motion sensors. These affordances are particularly important in live location-based storytelling, where interaction with the environment can strengthen spatial immersion.

In contrast, web applications are accessed through a browser and require a constant internet connection. While more universally compatible across devices and easier to programme, web applications often deliver a reduced user experience due to their limited access to device-specific resources. As Ribeiro (2014) notes, these limitations can impact the responsiveness, aesthetics, and overall functionality of mobile storytelling platforms.

The following subsections outline key elements in the design of narrative-driven applications.

1.3.1 Design Elements and Interaction Strategies

Locative Media and Spatial Engagement provides a foundation for spatial storytelling by delivering content linked to a user's physical location, typically via GPS-enabled devices. This capability enables visitors to access narrative content at specific geographic points, fostering a connection between narrative and place. Ferreira (2015) details this approach through the Travelplot Porto project, in which users explored a city-based narrative through mobile prompts. The experience encouraged users to engage actively with the urban landscape, constructing their own spatial narratives through personalised routes and interpretations. Similarly, Hoppstadius (2024) underscores the value of locative media in layering memory and meaning onto space, enhancing spatial awareness, and creating a participatory form of immersion. Through such projects, narrative triggers, whether audio, text, or visual, are embedded in the real experience, allowing users to experience interplay between the physical environment and the story world.

This locative connection is particularly relevant where visitors seek to connect narrative and place. Silva, Palmer, Nisi, and Straubhaar (2018) illustrate how locative media supports engagement by enabling participants to experience stories embedded within specific locales. In their Austin, Texas, case study, students created and shared multimedia narratives tied to historical sites, fostering both personal connection and reflection on place. Such findings highlight the potential of locative media to situate narratives in their physical settings developing embodied experiences that reinforce both memory and meaning.

Augmented Reality (AR) further extends these possibilities by allowing users to visualise digital content superimposed on real-world environments. In film tourism, AR can bring fictional settings into the physical world, offering new ways to experience iconic scenes, objects, or characters in situ. Zou (2022) finds that AR installations not only improve spatial understanding but also heighten emotional responses by making abstract or historical content tangible. This

ability to overlay narrative elements onto the real world provides a powerful mechanism for blurring fiction and reality, supporting immersive visitor engagement and memory retention.

Gamification and Decision-Based Interaction are increasingly used in narrative driven applications. These include tasks, challenges, and branching narratives that invite users to participate in story progression. Gamified systems have been shown to increase engagement by introducing elements of exploration, problem-solving, and reward (Xu, Buhalis, & Weber, 2017).

Jung (2018) observes that gamified tourism applications are particularly effective at maintaining user interest over extended periods. Xu et al. (2017) further identifies that embedding game mechanics in story narratives result in more meaningful and memorable experiences. These decision-based interactions mirror the emotional arc of traditional storytelling while grounding it in user agency and spatial movement.

1.3.2 Usability and Accessibility

While interactive features can deepen engagement, they must also be accessible. Accessibility is a key consideration in application design, requiring adherence to established guidelines such as the ISO (2024), which explores how usability encompasses effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction within a given context of use. Design systems must balance complexity with intuitiveness to accommodate varying levels of digital literacy.

Acosta Vargas (2021) emphasises the importance of simplified navigation structures and consistent visual hierarchies for mobile applications, particularly in supporting neurodiverse users. Accessibility considerations, such as adjustable contrast, text scaling, and offline functionality are especially important in rural or low-connectivity settings. Majrashi and Hamilton (2015) advocate for these features to be embedded in design from the beginning rather than through retroactive adaptations.

1.3.3 User Acceptance and Technology Adoption

The success of interactive applications depends not only on technical innovation but also on user willingness to adopt new technologies. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012) provides a robust framework for understanding user behaviour in this context. UTAUT identifies performance expectancy (perceived usefulness), effort expectancy (ease of use), social influence, and facilitating conditions as key determinants of technology acceptance and usage. In film-tourism, these factors are critical as users are more likely to embrace interactive technologies if they perceive clear benefits and find the applications easy to use.

Recent research has further refined these insights for tourism-specific technologies. For example, Xiaohong and Lai (2021) conducted a comprehensive study among mainland tourists in Macau, exploring what drives the acceptance of AR apps for film-induced tourism. Their study

found that performance expectancy and effort expectancy significantly impacted behavioural intention to adopt new technologies in film tourism.

The study emphasises that tourists are motivated to adopt technologies if they see clear benefits, such as improved efficiency or enjoyment during their activities. Ease of use further lowers barriers to adoption, as users are more willing to try new technology if it does not require significant effort or technical skill.

Xiaohong and Lai's findings align with the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), reinforcing that perceived usefulness and ease of use are both important across technology adoption contexts.

1.5 Current Applications

The emergence of film tourism as a cultural and commercial phenomenon has been increasingly shaped by advances in interactive and narrative technologies. As tourists seek deeper emotional and experiential connections with the media they consume, destination designers are responding with layered, interactive storytelling environments. Such experiences do more than simply guide visitors through locations associated with popular media; they aim to foster emotional resonance by embedding storytelling directly into the visitor journey.

Connell (2012) provides a comprehensive overview of film-induced tourism, identifying a spectrum of film tourism experiences, from visits to actual filming sites and studio tours to film-themed attractions and organised tours of portrayed locations. Importantly, Connell notes that the success of film tourism depends not only on the allure of the media content but also on the strategic planning and management of the visitor experience, including the use of technologies that enhance authenticity, interactivity, and narrative engagement.

A prominent example is the Harry Potter Studio Tour in Leavesden, where visitors engage with interactive and augmented reality (AR) tools that simulate spell-casting and other magical experiences. These technologies transform visitors from passive spectators into active participants, deepening immersion and extending the narrative beyond the screen (Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc, 2025).

Similarly, the *Sherlock Holmes Walking Tour* in the UK illustrates how GPS-triggered content can create synchronised, site-specific storytelling. As visitors navigate through real filming locations, audio-visual cues are triggered, merging geographic movement with unfolding narrative (Jensen, 2024). This mode of experiential design enables a form of tourism where visitors co-create meaning through spatial interaction.

At a more expansive scale, the *Game of Thrones Studio Tour* in Banbridge, Northern Ireland, offers a fully curated, multisensory experience using advanced projection and interactive displays. Housed within the original studio, it provides access to reconstructed sets and props while

surrounding visitors with cinematic effects. The result is a physical-digital experience where narrative is achieved through technology (Panasonic Connect., 2024).

These examples highlight how transmedia strategies can enhance visitor engagement by embedding narrative and interactivity directly into the tourism experience.



Figure 1: Harry Potter Studio Tour (Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc, 2025)

1.5.1 Transmedia Storytelling in Tourism Contexts

Beyond locative media design, numerous tourism projects have embraced a transmedia storytelling framework, distributing narrative elements across multiple platforms and physical spaces. These experiences are often non-linear, with stories unfolding dynamically through user interaction, exploration, and discovery.

A notable example is *WhaiWhai*, an interactive travel experience that turns city exploration into a storytelling puzzle. Available in cities such as Rome and New York, it blends historical facts with fictional elements, revealed gradually as users solve location-based challenges. Its dual structure, which includes both on-site and remote modes, allows participants to modulate their engagement and interpret the story at their own pace (whaiwhai, 2025).

The Roswell Experience, developed by Robert Pratten (2014), presents another application of transmedia storytelling in tourism. Situated in New Mexico, USA, the project weaves fictional alien narratives using GPS tasks, print materials, social media, and live events. By integrating multiple channels, the experience encourages visitors to actively construct meaning across contexts, illustrating the potential of transmedia strategies to support both storytelling and economic development.

Together, these projects illustrate the potential of transmedia approaches in tourism to create rich, participatory narratives that engage visitors beyond traditional sightseeing, encouraging deeper emotional and cognitive connections with place and story.

1.5.2 Technological Trends and Experiential Design in Film Tourism

As visitor expectations evolve, destinations increasingly incorporate technologies that support more immersive, emotionally resonant experiences, such as AR, which continues to feature prominently, offering a means to layer fictional content over real locations (Smith, 2024). The fusion of factual and fictional material within a single narrative frame provides a dynamic space, particularly for sites where historical depth aligns with popular media appeal.

Looking ahead, discussions around future developments frequently reference multisensory immersion. Haptic feedback, temperature modulation, and scent-based technologies are becoming central to theme park design, with potential to influence film tourism practices. The *Smellitzer* system at Disney parks, for example, uses ambient scent dispersal to enhance emotional engagement, demonstrating the psychological power of sensory layering in storytelling environments (Getahun, 2023).

1.5.3 Critical Perspectives: Accessibility, Authenticity, and Design Implications

While recent advances in transmedia tourism design have improved accessibility and authenticity, significant challenges remain. For example, interactive experiences often assume access to advanced devices and digital literacy, potentially excluding older or less technologically literate tourists. The complexity of interfaces may also hinder engagement for less tech-savvy users (Dick, 2021).

A further critique relates to over-commercialisation. The integration of high-tech media within heritage or culturally significant sites risks prioritising spectacle over authenticity. Connell (2012) cautions that when immersive technologies dominate the experience, the original cultural or historical context may be diminished, reframed more as entertainment than interpretation.

These tensions highlight the importance of careful design, particularly when transmedia storytelling is employed in historical settings. Balancing technological innovation with respect for authenticity is essential to create experiences that are both engaging and respectful of the sites' values.

1.5.4 Methodological Approaches in Previous Studies

The study of film tourism has utilised various methodological approaches, reflecting its broad spectrum and the integration of emerging technologies. The following are the key methodologies that have been widely used in recent studies:

Survey-Based Research: Quantitative surveys are used in film tourism studies to assess tourist behaviours, motivations, and satisfaction. Jorge Nieto-Ferrando (2024) explored the connections between the representation of tourist attractions, the way viewers interact with the film, and the effects on tourist destination recall. This approach is valuable for understanding preferences and behaviours.

Ethnographic and Narrative Approaches: Ethnographic research, including participant observation, has provided insights into the emotional and immersive aspects of film tourism. Yannik St-James (2021) used participant observation to study how tourists engage with film locations through activities like nesting and stamping, revealing how these practices deepen their connection to the cinematic narrative.

Mixed Methods: Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, have proven effective in capturing the complexity of film tourism. Anne Buchmann (2010) employed both surveys and interviews to investigate the role of authenticity in *The Lord of the Rings* tourism in New Zealand. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional and social dimensions of tourism experiences. Mixed-methods research provides a balanced perspective, combining the richness of qualitative data with the universality of quantitative findings.

1.6 Key Design Findings and Research Opportunities

The preceding literature highlights how immersive and narrative-led technologies have reshaped contemporary tourism design. Within this evolving landscape, effective transmedia storytelling is distinguished not by its technological alone, but by its capacity to integrate narrative and interaction into coherent, user-centred experiences. The convergence of emotional design, locative interactivity, and spatial storytelling positions such experiences not only as tools of visitor engagement, but as active participants in meaning-making and memory formation.

Von Stackelberg and Jones (2014) underscore that narrative coherence across platforms fosters deeper user investment, particularly when content invites interaction with site-specific themes. This is echoed in Jung and Dieck's (2018) analysis of gamification in tourism, demonstrates how narrative tasks embedded in physical environments promote emotional resonance and reinforce spatial awareness. Such design enables the user to act not merely as observer, but as agent within the story, navigating and contributing to the experience.

Equally vital is the integration of accessibility from the outset. Acosta-Vargas et al. (2021) emphasises that features such as intuitive interfaces and adaptive interaction models support broader usability, particularly for neurodiverse users and those in low-connectivity environments. This alignment with inclusive design ensures that interaction is not limited by technological or cognitive barriers but instead extends the potential for shared narrative engagement.

The design of effective transmedia film tourism experiences is not a purely technological challenge. Rather, it requires a layered, interdisciplinary approach, one that bridges narrative theory, user-centred design, and interactive technology in a way that is accessible, affective, and meaningful.

While existing studies offer valuable insights into the mechanics and emotional capability of interactive media, significant research opportunities remain. Particularly in the context of film tourism and its intersection with transmedia storytelling. Despite a growing body of work on the technological capabilities of location-based tools, there is significant opportunity to explore how these tools might be structured to support narrative and emotional engagement in film tourism.

This is particularly evident within the Irish context. Ireland's rich film heritage and growing reputation as a screen tourism destination have not yet been matched by a corresponding investment in interactive or narrative-driven visitor experiences. Most existing sites, especially informal or community-managed locations, remain underdeveloped in terms of digital engagement. The potential for transmedia storytelling to foster cultural and emotional connection remains largely untapped.

This study identifies an opportunity to apply design-based research methods to this space. While traditional research in tourism often adopts observational or evaluative approaches, this project instead takes a more interactive approach. By developing and evaluating a narrative-driven application prototype, *The Craggy Island Trail*, the research examines how transmedia storytelling can be designed to enrich narrative-driven experience and emotional engagement in Irish film tourism. In doing so, it contributes not only to tourism studies but to broader conversations about storytelling, technology, and the design of emotionally resonant visitor experiences.

The literature reviewed does not only establish theoretical relevance but serves a practical role in shaping the application prototype design in Phase 1 of the DBR cycle. Principles derived from research on user interaction, emotional design, and accessibility directly inform the project's functional requirements.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used to accomplish the research objectives of this thesis. The methodology section begins by introducing DBR, followed by the frameworks used to guide the research. Subsequent sections detail the research phases and methods of data collection, concluding with the approach to data analysis.

2.1 Design Based Research (DBR) Approach

This study employs a Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology to structure the development and iterative refinement of *The Craggy Island Trail* mobile application prototype.

Design-Based Research (DBR) is a systematic, iterative methodology aimed at improving educational practice through the design and analysis of interventions in real-world contexts. It was developed in response to the limitations of traditional research approaches that often fail to translate into practical educational improvements. This framework aims to generate both theoretical understanding and practical innovations by situating research within authentic settings and refining interventions through ongoing feedback and analysis (McKenney & Reeves, 2019).

This approach has been a key methodology employed in other studies regarding interactive technologies. For example, Wang (2020) employed a DBR approach to iteratively design and refine the integration of interactive technology in higher education classes, focusing on promoting increased engagement. This method is particularly relevant in the development of interactive multimedia tools, as it allows for improvement based on user feedback and testing.

For this study, research is structured across four interconnected phases: Analysis and Exploration, Design and Construction, Evaluation and Reflection, and Theoretical Refinement. These phases are neither strictly linear nor finalised upon completion; rather, they are adaptive

and informed by feedback loops that sustain thoroughness while responding to emergent user needs and design challenges.

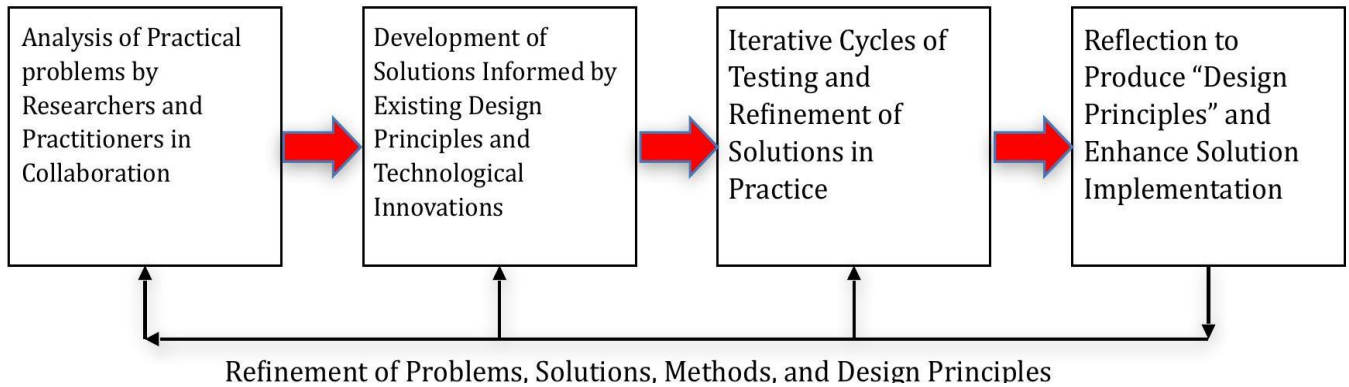


Figure 2: Four Phases of the DBR approach (Trez, Carlos, Guerra, Moreira, & Viera, 2011)

2.1.1 Phase 1: Analysis and Exploration

The initial phase established a theoretical foundation by reviewing literature from fields including transmedia storytelling, emotional design, mobile interaction, and film tourism. The goal was to determine how narrative design, and interactive technologies might be integrated to foster emotional engagement in a location-based application. This phase also included early contextual analysis of the Irish film tourism landscape to identify underexplored design opportunities.

In addition to reviewing literature, this phase involved testing a range of development environments and content delivery methods suitable for mobile narrative experiences. Options assessed included native and hybrid application frameworks and tools. This process was instrumental in evaluating constraints and informing the initial phase of design.

2.1.2 Phase 2: Design and Construction

Building on insights from the first phase, the second phase involved translating conceptual design principles into a functioning application prototype. Following McKenney and Reeves (2019), this transition from analysis to implementation is central to DBR.

The prototype was designed as a location-based narrative experience, engaging users at filming sites from the *Father Ted* series. Emphasis was placed on storytelling with source fidelity, multimedia content, and emotional cues to create a sense of immersion and user agency. Accessibility was prioritised through streamlined interaction design and offline compatibility.

This version of the application prototype formed the basis for evaluation in the subsequent phase and marked a critical point where conceptual intentions were embodied in a testable digital artefact.

2.1.3 Phase 3: Evaluation and Reflection

Phase 3 operationalised DBR's reflective cycle, integrating professional expertise to assess and refine the application. A focus group of seven multimedia and design professionals engaged with the prototype through a structured session framed by the Design, Dynamics, Experience (DDE) model (Walk, Görlich, & Barrett, 2017). Participants examined narrative structure, usability, interface clarity, and media coherence.

Their feedback informed both small-scale adjustments and broader conceptual refinements, including recommendations on logic, visual hierarchy, and content pacing. This professional-led evaluation helped clarify the balance between narrative immersion and technical functionality.

The iterative nature of this phase allowed design adjustments to be rapidly tested and further aligned with user expectations, fulfilling DBR's aim of grounding innovation in applied feedback.

2.1.4 Phase 4: Theoretical Refinement

The final phase synthesised findings from the full DBR cycle to refine both the application and its underlying design principles. A second focus group, composed of three potential end users familiar with *Father Ted* and interested in tourism, provided qualitative feedback on version 2 of the prototype. This session was structured around the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) developed by Bilandzic et al. (2019), enabling detailed insights into emotional and cognitive responses to narrative design.

Participants engaged were given a walkthrough of the application and offered reflections on usability, emotional resonance, and storytelling structure. Their feedback guided the development of version 3, enhancing both narrative clarity and technical performance.

This stage exemplified DBR's dual aim: the production of a user-validated design solution and the generation of transferable knowledge.

2.2 Evaluation Frameworks and Data Collection

This study employed a two-phase evaluation strategy involving design and multimedia professionals and potential users. Each phase was guided by a distinct yet complementary evaluative framework, allowing for a multidimensional analysis of the application's design, narrative coherence, and emotional engagement.

2.2.1 Professional-Led Evaluation: DDE Framework

The Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework created by Walk, Görlich, & Barrett (2017), is a structured approach for assessing the effectiveness, usability, and aesthetic quality of digital applications in real-world contexts.

In this study, the DDE framework was used to guide the structuring and facilitation of research, which involved design and multimedia professionals with experience in interactive technologies. Rooted in principles of game and interaction design, the DDE framework is an evolution of the Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics (MDA) model (Hunicke, Leblanc, & Zubek, 2004), offering a more context-sensitive and flexible approach to examining interactive systems.

Unlike MDA, DDE offers a more fluid account of user engagement by considering three interconnected dimensions:

- **Design:** Refers to the application's built-in properties, such as structure, rules, features, and affordances.
- **Dynamics:** Encompasses the patterns of interaction that emerge in use, often shaped by user behaviour and environmental context.
- **Experience:** Captures users' cognitive, emotional, and social responses, forming the subjective dimension of engagement.

These dimensions made DDE an appropriate tool for in-depth feedback on an application still in development, particularly where narrative coherence, emotional engagement, and usability intersect.

Data Collection: Focus Group 1 - Multimedia Professionals

Focus Group 1 was conducted during Phase 3 and involved seven participants with professional experience in multimedia design, interaction design, or narrative development. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, targeting professionals with at least three years of experience in multimedia design or digital storytelling and experience with interactive technologies.

The session used the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework to structure both its facilitation and data collection. Participants were prompted to evaluate the application prototype through three lenses:

- **Design:** Assessed interface organisation, typography, visual clarity, and navigational logic. This included evaluating whether structural elements supported story progression and interaction flow.
- **Dynamics:** Focused on user behaviour in context, including likely paths of engagement, possible confusion points, and how gamified features (clues, progress indicators) influenced perceived agency and interaction.

- **Experience:** Considered emotional resonance, narrative immersion, and unexpected user behaviours.

This framing was embedded within the focus group questions (Appendix A), guiding participants through a systematic reflection on both technical and experiential aspects of the application.

Notably, the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) model supported consideration of emergent issues such as battery usage, trail resumption, offline access, and integration of local business partnerships, which may otherwise have been overlooked in a conventional usability study.

Data from this session was analysed qualitatively with results feeding directly into the design of version 3 of the prototype. Participant feedback influenced refinements in story pacing, interaction flow, media layering, and interface clarity, ensuring the final design reflected expert-informed, context-sensitive design logic.

Table 1: Implementation of DDE in Focus Group 1

DDE Category	Question Number	Focus Group Question
Design	3	From what you observed in the walkthrough, how well did the interface appear to support navigation and story progression?
	4	Did the gamified elements (such as clues, progress bar, or story features) seem meaningful or in need of improvement, based on what you saw? How might these features better support user engagement?
	5	What would you consider essential multimedia components for designing an app that supports film-tourist engagement, based on the walkthrough?
	6	How effective did the app appear in terms of usability and accessibility, based on your observations?
	7	Were there any parts of the design (e.g. colours, transitions, layout) that you feel might exclude or frustrate some users?
	8	Were there any elements you noticed that you would remove, simplify, or redesign, based on how they appeared during the demonstration?
Dynamics	9	Based on your own expectations or preferences, what features would make this app more personally appealing or engaging for you?

DDE Category	Question Number	Focus Group Question
	10	What kinds of interactions or elements (e.g. mini games, AR features, show clips) do you think would enhance enjoyment or connection?
	11	If you were using this app in real life, what would you want it to do more of or do differently?
Experience	12	Were there moments in the walkthrough where it looked like the story and interactivity worked well together or clashed?
	13	How do you imagine a user might feel while using this app at a real-world location?
	14	What types of user behaviour or unexpected reactions do you think could emerge when people use the app?

2.2.2 Potential Users: Narrative Engageability Scale

To evaluate how users emotionally and cognitively engage with content, this study incorporates the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) developed by Bilandzic et al (2019). The NES was selected for its established validity and reliability in measuring users' emotional and cognitive engagement with narrative content, and in this study, it serves as an evaluative tool to examine individual responses to a story-driven application, with a focus on how users process and emotionally connect to story elements.

The scale conceptualises narrative engageability through five dimensions, which are:

- **Attentional Focus:** The ability to concentrate on the narrative while ignoring external distractions.
- **Emotional Engagement:** The extent to which users experience empathy or emotional responses.
- **Mental Imagery:** The capacity to visualise scenes and interpret them imaginatively.
- **Transportation:** The sense of psychological immersion in the story world.
- **Suspension of Disbelief:** The user's willingness to accept the story's internal logic.

These dimensions are particularly well suited to evaluating media experiences that are both interactive and context-dependent, such as location-based narrative applications. Their use allowed this study to move beyond surface-level usability concerns to address how stories resonate and are internalised by users.

Data Collection: Focus Group 2 - Potential Users

Conducted during Phase 4, this focus group aimed to assess how potential users engage with narrative content in ways that align with emotional response, cultural familiarity, and tourism motivations. Three participants were selected using purposive sampling based on prior familiarity with *Father Ted* and an interest in tourism, ensuring informed and relevant insights.

This session was structured using an adapted version of the NES, supplemented by principles drawn from the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework used in Focus Group 1. While NES provided a structured lens for evaluating emotional and narrative immersion, DDE helped capture responses to interface design and interactive features. This dual-framework approach allowed for a holistic understanding of the user experience, encompassing affective engagement, cognitive investment, and media interaction.

Participants were shown a guided walkthrough of Version 2 of *The Craggy Island Trail* application prototype, after which they engaged in a structured discussion. The questioning drew on NES dimensions (Appendix B) but was modified to have a closer focus on themes such as narrative engagement, emotional connection, usability and interaction, and multimedia experience and functionality.

Feedback from this group was instrumental in refining the application's third iteration. Participants identified specific moments of emotional resonance, highlighted preferences for non-linear storytelling, and suggested improvements to visual design and cultural integration. These insights shaped both the narrative structure and the technical delivery of the application's final version.

Table 2: Implementation of NES in Focus Group 2

Adapted Focus Group Question	Source NES Question(s)	Example NES Prompt
How would you describe your emotional connection with the story world after the walkthrough?	NES Q4–6: Emotional Engageability	Did you feel emotionally affected by any parts of the experience? Were there moments where you felt especially happy, nostalgic, or even sad?
How engaged did you feel with the narrative during the walkthrough?	NES Q1–3: Presence Propensity	Did you find yourself mentally stepping into the world of the story?
What particular elements of the application (choices, story, design etc.) stood out as most	Expanded from NES Q1–3: Presence Propensity	

Adapted Focus Group Question	Source NES Question(s)	Example NES Prompt
effective in helping you feel involved with the story?		
How did the inclusion of familiar moments, quotes, or characters from the show affect your connection with the experience?	NES Q5–6: Character Identification	Did seeing familiar characters or quotes make you feel closer to the story or part of it?
Would experiences like this make you more curious to explore stories and locations from other films or TV shows?	NES Q7–10: Suspense/Curiosity Propensity	Did this type of story-driven experience make you want to learn more about the world or characters?
Would you describe this type of experience as immersive? Why or why not?	NES Q11–16: Ease of Accepting Unrealism & Being Engaged Despite Surroundings	Were there any moments where you felt momentarily ‘in’ the world?

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were fully addressed throughout this study. No personally identifiable information about participants is presented in this thesis. All interviews and focus group sessions were recorded with prior informed consent from participants, obtained before each session commenced. During data collection sessions, participants were clearly informed of the study's purpose. Audio recordings were accessed solely by the author and were subsequently deleted in accordance with data protection agreements. Transcripts and qualitative data presented in this thesis are fully anonymised to protect participant confidentiality.

2.4 Prototype Testing and Feedback

The prototype was evaluated iteratively during and after the focus group sessions. Participants interacted with successive versions of the application in a controlled setting, allowing for structured observation and feedback. Data was collected through observational notes, and recorded user interactions and facilitated discussions. Feedback gathered at each stage directly informed subsequent design refinements, ensuring *The Craggy Island Trail* application developments were continually aligned with research.

2.5 Thematic Analysis of Focus Group Findings

To analyse the qualitative data collected through focus group discussions, this study employed Thematic Analysis (TA), following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2012). Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and suitability in identifying patterns of meaning across group data, making it effective for capturing user feedback. This approach aligns with the practice-oriented nature of the research, providing insights into how participants perceived narrative engagement, emotional connection, usability, and multimedia integration.

Thematic analysis was conducted on transcripts of both focus group sessions and accompanying observational notes.

Following Braun and Clarke's six-phase process:

1. **Familiarisation with the data:** All transcripts and notes were read, and initial impressions and recurring ideas were noted to guide subsequent analysis.
2. **Generating initial codes:** Segments of text reflecting salient features were systematically coded to capture key features of the data, such as participants' reflections on emotional engagement, narrative coherence, usability, and multimedia elements. The coding process was informed by the dimensions of the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) Framework (Walk, Görlich, & Barrett, 2017) and the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) (Bilandzic, Sukalla, Schnell, Hastall, & Busselle, 2019), which were integrated into focus groups, to ensure alignment with the study's focus.
3. **Searching for themes:** The initial codes were organised into broader, overarching themes, such as Narrative Engagement, Emotional Connection, Usability and Interaction, and Multimedia Experience and Functionality.
4. **Reviewing themes:** These themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and clear distinction. This involved re-reading all extracts within each theme to ensure internal consistency and comparing themes against each other to confirm they were distinct and non-overlapping. Some themes were merged where overlap was identified, while others were split into subthemes to capture more nuanced data.
5. **Defining and naming themes:** Each theme was clearly described and given a meaningful tag, supported by examples from the participants' feedback to illustrate its relevance.
6. **Producing the report:** The findings were then interpreted in light of the research questions and situated within the broader literature on transmedia storytelling and film tourism to highlight their significance.

By applying thematic analysis, this study ensured that the design recommendations and conclusions are grounded in systematically derived qualitative evidence, adding methodological rigour and depth to the findings.

3. Findings and Outcomes of Design-Based Research Phases

This chapter details the key findings and outcomes that emerged across the four phases of this Design-Based Research (DBR) study. It outlines how each phase contributed to the iterative development of *The Craggy Island Trail* prototype, integrating theoretical insights, user feedback, and design refinements.

3.1 Phase 1

This stage of the DBR process established the theoretical foundation for the application design, drawing on secondary literature to identify narrative, technological, and experiential priorities.

By integrating scholarship across transmedia storytelling, emotional design, interactive systems, and tourism studies, the aim was to define actionable design parameters for a mobile prototype that would support narrative-driven film tourism experiences.

3.1.1 Application Requirements from Literature

Central to this review was the understanding that effective transmedia storytelling must enable users to engage both cognitively and emotionally. Lee, Jung, and Kim (2020), and Gyimóthy et al. (2015) demonstrate that layered narratives can transform passive tourism into a participatory, emotionally resonant experience. This effect is amplified when narrative content is fragmented across media and locations, allowing users to reconstruct meaning through interaction.

The value of branching narratives and layered content were further emphasised by Gyimóthy et al. (2015), who outlined that such engagement has been shown to influence

satisfaction and behavioural intentions. These processes reflect user agency while deepening the connection between narrative and spatial context.

Emotional engagement is a consistent theme throughout the reviewed literature. Volo (2021) identifies that affective design strategies, such as the use of nostalgia, humour, or familiar characters, can strengthen narrative immersion and memory formation. For this study, mirroring the emotional tone of *Father Ted* within the app's storytelling and ensuring story fidelity became a key priority. Keshavarv (2024) additionally outlines this as an important driver for emotional connection. The inclusion of quotes, visual motifs, and iconic locations were prioritised, and aimed to evoke recognition and facilitate affective attachment.

Technological integration was also guided by literature on locative media and spatial storytelling. Ferreira et al. (2015) illustrate how location-triggered content can foster personal connection and spatial awareness, transforming environments into narrative-rich sites. By linking digital narratives to specific locations, locative media not only personalises the visitor experience but also deepens the sense of place, encouraging engagement.

Gamification adds another dimension to narrative immersion. Xu, Buhalis, and Weber (2017) and Jung (2018) show that interactive tasks and branching storylines enhance user engagement, particularly when integrated within a physical tourism context. Such features shift the user from passive viewer to active participant, reinforcing both enjoyment and retention.

Inclusive design principles were a core concern. Acosta Vargas et al. (2021) and Majrashi et al. (2015) argue for accessibility to be embedded from the outset, particularly through simplified navigation, text scaling, and consistency across interface elements. These considerations are especially relevant in low-connectivity contexts, where digital confidence and device availability may vary widely.

In parallel, user adoption literature (Xiaohong & Lai, 2021) highlights how ease of use and thematic relevance influence acceptance. For this prototype, ensuring an intuitive interface that aligns with *Father Ted* was essential. The application needed to provide immediate familiarity while demanding minimal onboarding.

Ultimately, the literature suggests that the most impactful film tourism applications are those which integrate narrative coherence, emotional engagement, and technical accessibility. These findings directly informed the prototype's design logic, supporting layered storytelling, site-specific interactivity, and inclusive user experience.

3.1.2 Narrative Development

The narrative development process for the prototype application drew upon both theoretical models of storytelling and the contextual specificity of the *Father Ted* universe. The storyline was constructed to support emotional engagement, location-based interactivity, and user agency within a transmedia framework.

Inspired by mystery-driven narratives, the application's storyline revolves around the disappearance of the Holy Stone of Clonrichert (Appendix C). The story unfolds across multiple real-world locations featured in the original *Father Ted* television series, encouraging users to solve a mystery by collecting clues and exploring iconic sites.

The episodic structure mirrors that of the original series, breaking the narrative into five chapters that correspond with key locations: Father Ted's house, St. Kevin's Stump, Aillwee Cave, Kilfenora Village, and the Cliffs of Moher. Each chapter introduces a new clue and deepens the user's involvement with the mystery. This structure supports narrative coherence while allowing exploration.

To maintain narrative authenticity and encourage emotional connection, the story incorporates canonical characters from the *Father Ted* universe. These include Father Ted, Father Dougal, Father Jack, and Father Damo. Their inclusion ensures familiarity and provides a consistent tonal anchor throughout the experience. Their dialogue and actions are designed to reflect the humour and irreverence of the original show, enhancing user immersion.

The extension of these characters into new narrative scenarios represents a transmedia approach, as defined by Jenkins (2006), whereby story elements expand across platforms without contradiction, enriching the overall fictional world. The application thus serves as a diegetic extension of the television series.

The story's emotional arc was deliberately crafted to blend humour, nostalgia, and suspense. These emotional tones were selected based on Volo's (2021) research on emotional design, which identifies humour and nostalgia as key drivers of user engagement in cultural heritage contexts.

Additionally, the use of mystery as a narrative device supports engagement through curiosity and problem-solving. Green's (2024) Narrative Transportation Theory suggests that emotional and intellectual investment in a story increase when users are required to take an active role in meaning-making.

3.2 Phase 2: Prototype Development

Following the identification of narrative and technological design requirements, the development of the prototype application constituted the second phase of the Design-Based Research (DBR) process. This stage focused on translating conceptual design priorities into an operational digital artefact. A key consideration involved selecting an appropriate development pathway that would accommodate iterative testing, cross-platform usability, and content-rich interaction.

3.2.1 Evaluating Development Pathways

Multiple development approaches were initially considered for the prototype. Native application development, using platform-specific languages such as Swift (for iOS) or Kotlin (for Android), would offer good performance, full device integration, and offline capabilities. However, it typically requires maintaining multiple codebases, increasing complexity for small-scale or research-focused deployments.

Progressive Web Applications (PWAs), which utilise standard web technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript), provide another option. While limited in terms of device-level integration (e.g., restricted access to GPS sensors or offline AR functionality), PWAs are easy to deploy, and device-agnostic, making them particularly effective for accessibility and quick distribution.

For this project, the decision was made to construct a web-based prototype, enabling fast iteration, straightforward design, ease of testing, and user accessibility. This development method, while more constrained than native or hybrid alternatives, aligned with the needs of the DBR cycles and the primary goal of generating feedback from focus groups and implementing further developments to the prototype application.

3.2.2 Development Workflow

The technical development of the prototype unfolded through seven phases, each focusing on key functional and experiential features:

Project Planning & Requirements Gathering:

This stage involved mapping the user journey, identifying application features, and collecting or generating content assets. Key elements included navigation structure (e.g., chapter selection, map integration), narrative flow, and user interaction mechanisms, such as trail progression.

Datasets & Content Preparation: Locations were embedded using GeoJSON files, each tied to a chapter within the trail. Visual assets were optimised for web delivery, and narrative content was structured using JavaScript for seamless dynamic loading.

HTML Structure: The interface was constructed using modular HTML layouts, allowing for discrete navigation views (e.g., intro, chapters, settings).

CSS Styling: The visual identity of the application was informed by the aesthetics of *Father Ted*, employing

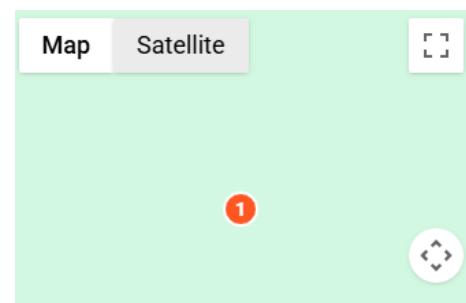


Figure 3: Map Integration



Figure 4: Early Stages of Prototype Development

a custom palette, typography, and responsive layout via CSS Grid. Subtle animations were implemented to support interaction feedback and visual engagement.

JavaScript Functionality: Core interactivity was achieved through custom JavaScript, including map integration via Google Maps API. The codebase handled navigation logic, content rendering based on location data, quiz interactions, and local storage of user progress. Interactive elements such as modals and prompts were built using JavaScript to maintain full control over behaviour and styling.

Testing & Debugging: The prototype was tested across modern browsers and device types to ensure responsiveness and reliability. Accessibility checks were conducted using automated tools and manual testing for keyboard navigation and screen reader compatibility.



Figure 5: Version 1 Application Intro

3.2.3 Design and Focus

Building on insights from Phase 1, the prototype's design was shaped by principles of narrative immersion, emotional engagement, and interaction. In keeping with early-stage DBR methodology, the design scope was deliberately constrained to prioritise clarity and interface stability. This allowed for targeted feedback and refinement based on user engagement and contextual interaction.

Thematic Structuring and Location Mapping: The narrative was structured around five geographically dispersed filming locations in County Clare, each forming a chapter of the overarching story. This spatial storytelling approach aligned narrative progression with physical movement, enabling location-based interaction to reinforce thematic continuity and emotional connection.

The selected locations were Father Ted's House, St. Kevin's Stump, Aillwee Cave, Kilfenora Village, and the Cliffs of Moher. Each chapter was anchored in one of these real-world sites, allowing the user's physical journey to mirror the unfolding of the fictional storyline. This format supported place-based engagement, encouraging reflective immersion and situational awareness.

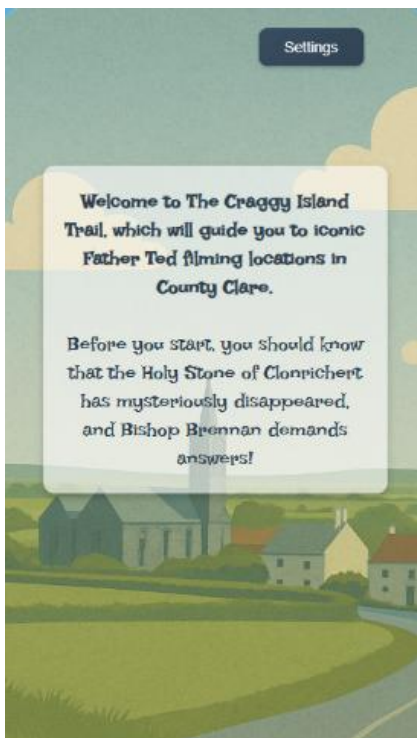


Figure 6: Version 1 Start Page

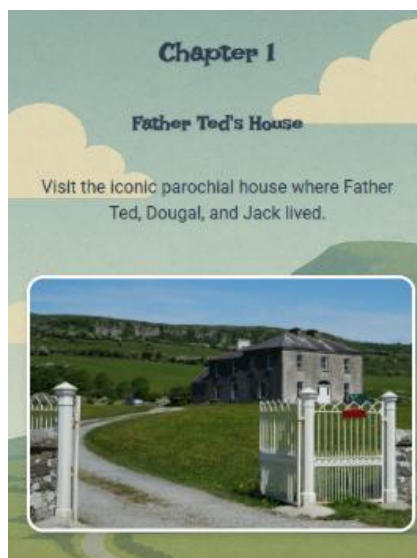


Figure 7: Version 1 Chapter Page

Visual Identity and Interaction Design: A mobile-responsive interface was employed, drawing stylistic cues from the *Father Ted* series to maintain thematic resonance. Typography was selected for both legibility and cultural reference, combining fonts, *Roboto* with *Irish Grover* to evoke a playful aesthetic. The application started with a minimalist introductory screen highlighting its academic context, followed by a start page that outlined the narrative premise in an accessible, humorous tone. Humour and absurdity, consistent with the series' style, were embedded into both content and interface.

Navigation Structure and Content Presentation: Users progressed through the experience at their own pace, selecting chapters in sequence. Each chapter page included:

- Chapter title and number
- Location image
- Narrative text styled for visual emphasis
- Two core interaction buttons: “Get Directions” and “I’m Here”
- Integrated Google Maps component

The text content embedded narrative clues designed to advance the mystery storyline, inviting users to interpret elements in relation to the location. Titles and descriptions employed tone and phrasing that echoed the source material, maintaining narrative consistency.

Accessibility and User Personalisation: Accessibility considerations were integrated at the foundational level. The settings menu included:

- Adjustable text size
- Volume controls

These features addressed inclusivity across user demographics, supporting both older audiences and users with varying levels of digital literacy. These design decisions were directly informed by literature advocating

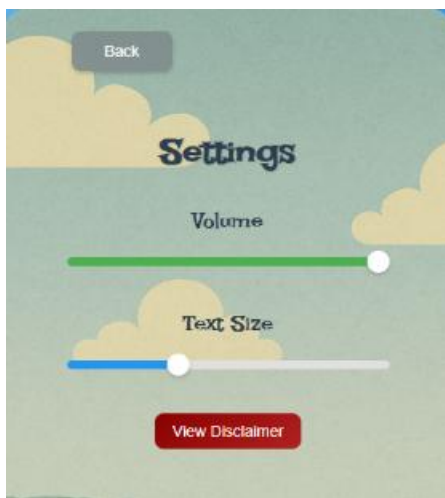


Figure 8: Version 1 Settings Page



Figure 9: Version 1 Congratulatory Message

for inclusive mobile interface strategies in tourism contexts (Acosta-Vargas, Salvador-Acosta, Salvador-Ullauri, Villegas-Ch, & Gonzalez, 2021).

Gamified Feedback and User Motivation: Several light-touch elements were included to support user motivation:

- Progress tracking via a stone icon
- Chapter verification prompts
- Completion feedback at the end of each section
- A final congratulatory message upon trail completion

These features were intended to scaffold user engagement without imposing unnecessary complexity, allowing the narrative to remain central while guiding users through the experience.

This phase concluded with a functioning mobile prototype that was narrative-focused, visually cohesive, and designed to elicit emotional resonance through contextual interaction. It established the groundwork for evaluation and refinement in the subsequent phase.

3.3 Phase 3: Professional Perspectives and User Design Implementations

3.3.1 Focus Group 1 Results

To assess the viability of the initial application prototype of *The Craggy Island Trail*, a 45-minute focus group was conducted with seven design and multimedia professionals with interactive experience (Appendix D). The session was structured using the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework (Walk, Görlich, & Barrett, 2017), which shaped the development of discussion prompts and helped to guide the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) of findings.

Design Evaluation and Interface Feedback

The interface was described as intuitive, with effective navigation flow and appropriate tonal alignment with the *Father Ted* source material. Humour and character-specific phrasing were particularly praised for reinforcing narrative identity.

However, several design limitations were identified:

- Inconsistencies in font usage, particularly in sizing and styling, led to recommendations for a streamlined typographic approach to improve readability.
- The absence of a trail overview created uncertainty about the geographic scale and sequence of the experience. Participants suggested incorporating a full-map view with a “You Are Here” indicator to improve spatial orientation.
- The “I’m Here” location verification prompt was perceived as vague, with users unclear about when and where it should be activated.
- Clarification of the overall experience structure was needed. Suggestions included adding chapter duration estimates, distance markers, difficulty ratings, and clearer chapter headings to help users plan and pace their journey.
- It was recommended that users be allowed to complete chapters non-sequentially, accommodating different visitation patterns and ensuring flexibility in trail engagement.

Enhancing Multimodal Engagement

A consistent theme in the feedback was the desire for richer sensory and narrative layering:

- Participants proposed the inclusion of optional audio guides at each location, featuring contextual information, trivia from specific episodes, and local details.
- Suggestions also included the integration of images and voice clips to deepen emotional engagement and support transmedia immersion.
- To broaden the application’s utility, participants recommended including nearby amenity listings, such as food and accommodation, to encourage extended on-site exploration.
- Gamified rewards were positively received. These were seen as effective mechanisms to support engagement and memory retention, particularly when personalised through character-driven humour or messages.
- Social sharing features were also discussed, with one participant suggesting that thematic messages from show characters could enhance post-experience interaction.

Anticipated User Behaviour and Contextual Constraints

In exploring how the application might function in real-world contexts, participants highlighted several practical challenges:

- Concerns were raised about GPS functionality, battery drain, and mobile data dependency. To mitigate this, offline functionality and low-power design features were advised.
- It was suggested that users might abandon the trail partway through, prompting a call for features such as progress saving and resume options.
- Safety considerations were also addressed. Participants recommended a pre-trail orientation screen, estimated travel times based on transport mode, and the inclusion of emergency contacts and disclaimers.
- The potential for community integration was noted, with a proposal for partnering with local businesses to offer discounts or promotions to application users, thereby enhancing value, and fostering local engagement.

These findings provided a well-rounded evaluation of version 1 of the prototype, identifying both design strengths and structural weaknesses. The application of the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework enabled feedback to be categorised across design intent, emergent behaviours, and user expectations, yielding specific recommendations.



Figure 10: Version 2 Map Introduction with clearer Typography

3.3.2 Refinement Based on Feedback

In response to the professional feedback obtained during Focus Group 1, the prototype of *The Craggy Island Trail* underwent a series of targeted refinements. These revisions focused on enhancing usability, clarifying user expectations, and deepening narrative engagement, all while maintaining the core design principles of accessibility, humour, and narrative coherence.

Usability and Interface Enhancements (Designed)

Typography and Text Presentation: Typographic inconsistencies identified by participants were addressed through the adoption of a unified visual language. Roboto was selected as the primary typeface due to its clarity and screen adaptability, replacing previous mixed-font implementations. Font sizing was standardised and made adjustable via the settings menu to accommodate user preferences and improve readability across devices. Additionally, chapter pages were restructured to include clear titles, difficulty indicators, and estimated durations, supporting user orientation and pre-engagement planning.

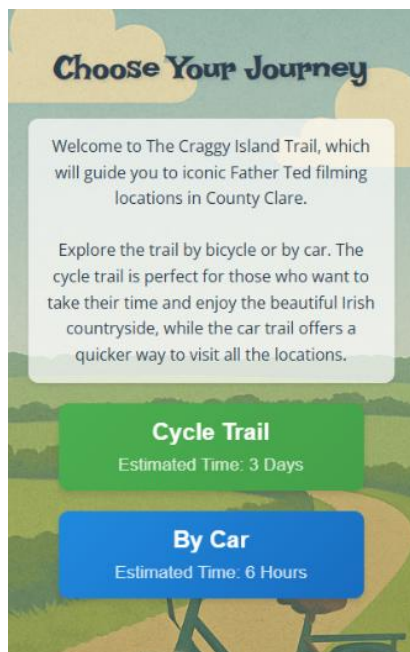


Figure 11: Version 2 Trail Choice



Figure 12: Version 2 Imagery
Consistent with source Narrative

Trail Overview and Navigation Clarity: To resolve confusion regarding the trail's scope and progression, a comprehensive overview screen was introduced. This visual map allows users to see the entire route and preview chapter locations. The application from this point supports non-linear navigation, enabling users to engage with chapters in any order while maintaining a coherent narrative structure.

Location Verification Improvements: The initial “I’m Here” button was replaced with the more intuitive label “I’ve Arrived,” accompanied by landmark cues and supporting images to assist users in confirming their location. While full GPS automation was deferred to prioritise application performance and offline accessibility, these adjustments increased user clarity and confidence in progression.

Experience Framing and User Expectations: To clarify the nature of the experience, an introductory briefing screen was introduced before starting the trail. This allows users to decide between a “Cycling” and “Driving” trail while explaining the type of experience, trail duration, and introduces chapter themes and travel requirements.

Episode References and Visual Elements: Further pop-ups were introduced, including episode references and dialogue snippets. These references draw on the show's humour and visual style to support nostalgic recognition without overwhelming the primary storyline.

Gamification and Personalised Rewards: To encourage completion and shareability, users receive a digital certificate upon finishing all chapters. While simple in form, this feature aligns with the show’s humour and supports emotional closure.

Session Persistence and Trail Continuity: A session-saving feature was introduced. Users can now exit the application and later resume from their last completed chapter.

Nearby Amenities and Local Context: Each chapter now includes a “What’s Nearby” section, detailing nearby amenities and suggested points of interest. Information includes restaurants and accommodation, tailored to the unique offerings of each trail location.

3.4 Phase 4: Final Developments

3.4.1 Focus Group 2 Results: Application of the NES Framework

Focus Group 2 consisted of potential end users who represented the target audience of *The Craggy Island Trail* (Appendix E). These participants evaluated Version 2 of the application, providing feedback through a session grounded in the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES). The session aimed to assess how narrative and design features supported emotional involvement, spatial immersion, and tourism motivation.

Table 3: NES Results

NES Dimension	User Quote
Emotional Engageability	"It reminded me of watching Father Ted at my grandmother’s house... That kind of absurd humour really stuck with me."
	"It’s fun, nostalgic, and informative... Even if someone isn’t a fan at the start, they’ll learn something new."
Presence Propensity	"You get Dougal’s vague memory and these little humorous touches” “It plays out like a story the whole way through."
	"It's something I hadn’t seen before, and it genuinely made me want to do the trail, get in the car, and visit the locations."
Character Identification	"It really felt like something Dougal might have written himself, in the best way possible."
	"For me, the use of the characters and their phrases... definitely evoked nostalgia."

Suspense/Curiosity Propensity	"It pulls you along really nicely... You think you're about to solve it, but then the guy in the pub gives some information."
	"There's even an element of mystery since you don't know exactly what's coming next in each chapter."
Ease of Accepting Unrealism & Being Engaged Despite Surroundings	"You're following a map and going from A to B to C... and it's tailored to your interests." "It was informative and guided me along, so I felt more engaged."

Emotional Connection and humour: Participants responded strongly to elements that blended humour with nostalgia. Emotional resonance was cited as a key strength, particularly where character dialogue, visual cues, and narrative tone aligned well with the original series. One participant noted, "That really made me laugh. It brought back great memories," while another described how the integration of quotes and storyline "pulls you in... it leads you along the trail while evoking those nostalgic memories."

Narrative consistency was also highlighted, with users affirming that the tone was faithful to the series.

Presence and Personalisation: The ability to choose a transportation mode (cycling or car) and the inclusion of a journey-based map created what participants positively described as a "personalised route". The navigation was also positively received, supporting perceptions of spatial immersion and personal control. These features supported what the NES defines as "presence propensity," where users feel cognitively and physically situated within the story environment.

Suspense and Curiosity: Curiosity was effectively sustained using a mystery narrative (the missing Holy Stone), and progression-based storytelling. Participants outlined how each "Each area brings up a different memory or conversation about the show, and that encourages deeper exploration."

Several participants expressed interest in hidden content or unlockable features, suggesting these could increase reusability and add layers to the narrative. This aligns with the NES dimension of curiosity propensity, supporting user engagement through narrative intrigue.

Character Integration and Humour: Character integration was highly effective. Users responded positively to seeing familiar figures like Father Ted, Dougal, and Father Jack embedded in the trail's narrative. Familiar quotes and humour were described as key entry points into the narrative. One participant remarked, "It really felt like something Dougal might have written himself."

These elements served as emotional anchors, reinforcing the application's goal of providing an affective, character-driven experience embedded in cultural memory, confirming that the third

iteration of the application achieved a strong degree of narrative engagement across NES dimensions.

3.4.2 Cultural Resonance and Tourism Motivation:

Feedback consistently affirmed that the application resonated with participants' cultural identities and humour. Users described the application as “distinctly Irish,” with one noting, “It’s deeply embedded in Irish culture and humour.” References such as “The money was only resting in my account” were cited as iconic and of a shared national understanding.

The prototype also demonstrated motivational potential for tourism. Several users expressed interest in visiting the featured locations after using the app, with one stating, “We should all do it this summer.” Others described it as a practical planning tool, highlighting how the blend of narrative, humour, and embedded travel information created an effective and engaging itinerary.

The inclusion of location-specific amenities and travel suggestions further strengthened this response. One user noted, “It genuinely made me want to do the trail, get in the car, and visit the locations and cafés.” The application’s integration of fictional narrative with real-world utility was perceived as both innovative and inviting.



Figure 13: Version 3 Final Quiz

3.4.3 Refinement Based on Feedback

The third iteration of *The Craggy Island Trail* was informed directly by feedback obtained from Focus Group 2. This phase prioritised enhancements that advanced narrative immersion, improved functional usability, and reinforced cultural resonance. Modifications reflected both user preferences, integrating insights into concrete design refinements.

Narrative Progression and Interactive Story Progression: While participants responded positively to the application’s tone and humour, mirroring that of the original series, there was a clear desire for more substantial narrative progression. To address this, version 3 introduced expanded dialogue and a refined narrative. A notable addition was the concluding interactive quiz, prompting users to answer the question “Who stole the



Figure 14: Version 3 More from Father Ted

Holy Stone?"). This encouraged user reflection on narrative elements and sustained engagement through to the final chapter.

Gamification Features and Motivational Design:

User feedback also highlighted the motivational impact of gamified features. Version 3 incorporated differentiated completion certificates based on transportation mode (cycling or driving), adding a personalised dimension to the reward system. A share-to-social function was added to encourage engagement beyond the application and promote user interaction with peers.

Interface Improvements and Accessibility:

To enhance visual clarity and reduce cognitive load, several interface revisions were introduced. These included increased font sizes for key headings, improved visual hierarchy in chapter screens, and clearer indicators distinguishing completed from pending chapters.

In response to feedback from users opting for the cycling trail, a new disclaimer was added. This outlined considerations such as terrain challenges, safety reminders, and preparation tips, ensuring that users were appropriately informed before selecting this mode of travel.

Content Expansion for Cultural Engagement: Participants also identified the need for broader context, particularly for users unfamiliar with *Father Ted*. To address this, a dedicated section titled "More from Father Ted" was introduced. This included supplementary material such as cast biographies, behind-the-scenes trivia, and references to related filming sites. The intention was to enrich cultural engagement and provide additional layers of meaning, enhancing the experience for both domestic and international audiences.

3.4.4 Comparative Analysis of Professional and End-User Feedback

A comparative analysis of feedback from design and multimedia professionals with experience in interactive technologies (Focus Group 1) and potential end users (Focus Group 2) revealed both converging and diverging priorities, offering a multidimensional perspective. Both groups emphasised the value of narrative coherence and high-quality audiovisual integration. However, the emphasis and interpretation of these elements varied.

The professionals brought a production-oriented lens to the evaluation, focusing on structural coherence, interface consistency, and design features. They highlighted issues such as typographic clarity, media layering efficiency, and the adaptability of the interaction model across platforms or future content expansions. Technical feasibility was a concern especially under real-world conditions.

In contrast, users expressed a preference for features that supported exploration, including new features and non-linear progression. Emotional engagement, cultural resonance, and the sense of immersion were valued and cited as key motivators for potential site visitation.

These insights informed a balanced and iterative refinement strategy. Multimedia professional feedback ensured that revisions remained structurally sound and technically viable, while user input guaranteed that design decisions responded to experiential quality and contextual relevance. This synthesis of perspectives allowed the final prototype to reflect both expert design standards and user-centred values, demonstrating the utility of integrating professional and audience feedback in the development of interactive cultural applications.

3.5 Conclusion

The development of *The Craggy Island Trail* through a four-phase Design-Based Research (DBR) structure enabled the exploration of a transmedia, location-based experience in film tourism. Research integrated theoretical concepts, user feedback, and iterative design, providing evidence of how users engage with transmedia storytelling, emotional design, and locative media.

In Phase 1, the foundational review of interdisciplinary literature established the core design criteria for the application, including narrative cohesion, usability, emotional resonance, and locative interaction. This preparatory work also informed the decision to structure the application as a chapter-based experience anchored in real filming locations, blending academic insight with practical design aims.

Phase 2 transitioned these conceptual priorities into a working application prototype. Initial design outputs prioritised a lightweight, user-friendly structure to test the feasibility of location-based storytelling in a mobile format. Core features such as interactive chapters, embedded clues, and humour consistent with the original series served as the foundation for user testing.

Phase 3 introduced structured evaluation through Focus Group 1, composed of seven design and multimedia professionals with experience in interactive systems. Applying the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) framework, participants offered feedback on interface design, narrative clarity, and practical use scenarios. Their insights prompted revisions including improved map integration, typography, and greater transparency in trail expectations. This stage also led to the inclusion of multimedia features and enhanced usability tools, deepening the application's appeal without compromising simplicity.

In Phase 4, three potential end users participated in a focus group using the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES). These participants, already attuned to *Father Ted*, offered valuable perspectives on emotional engagement, humour, and the user experience. In response, version 3 of the prototype was refined to include an expanded narrative, quiz-based story closure, interface improvements, and anchored content such as the “More from Father Ted” section. Practical enhancements, like travel-mode selection, resume functionality, and embedded amenity listings, reflected the app’s dual role as narrative tool and as a functional guide.

The iterative design and development process supported how principles of transmedia narrative, emotional engagement, and locative interaction could be translated into a usable and engaging visitor experience. The final version of *The Craggy Island Trail*³ represents a compelling proof of concept for location-based transmedia storytelling in film tourism. It offers a structured experience that fosters emotional connection, narrative engagement, and exploratory behaviour.

Although deliberately scoped to suit an application prototype context, the design invites further innovation. Suggestions from users, including more interactive features, character-specific pathways, or AR integration, represent natural directions for potential future development.

Moreover, the structural model demonstrated here is adaptable to other television or film-based tourism contexts. By combining location-based storytelling, source authentic content, user-centred design, and narrative engagement, the application format holds potential for broader applications, whether situated in Ireland or beyond.

³ Final prototype imagery of *The Craggy Island Trail* is provided in Appendix F.

4. Discussion

This chapter interprets the findings from the development and evaluation of *The Craggy Island Trail*, relating them to the study's research question and sub-questions. It situates the results within relevant theoretical frameworks and literature, focusing on narrative engagement, multimedia integration, and tourism motivation. Broader implications for theory and practice are outlined, along with the study's methodological and practical limitations.

4.1 Key Findings Related to Research Questions

The development of *The Craggy Island Trail* yielded several core findings directly aligned with the research questions. Drawing on user feedback, design outcomes, and existing literature, these findings demonstrate how transmedia storytelling can enhance narrative engagement, support location-based interaction, and motivate tourism within a film-related context.

4.1.1 Main Research Question: How can transmedia storytelling be designed to enrich narrative-driven experience and emotional engagement in Irish film tourism?

The findings of this study demonstrate that transmedia storytelling, when resonant to origin content and supported by interactivity and locative technologies, can enhance narrative immersion and emotional engagement within the context of Irish film tourism. Drawing on Von Stackelberg and Jones' (2014) model, which conceptualises transmedia storytelling as the extension of narrative elements across platforms and into physical environments, the application enabled users to engage directly with familiar characters and themes from *Father Ted*, a series embedded in Ireland's culture. This spatial integration of narrative and location contributed to a sense of emotional engagement, facilitated through application design.

The application prototype achieved this effect using narrative progression that combined location-based content with decision-driven interaction. This structure sustained user curiosity and encouraged what Green (2024) describes as narrative transportation, immersion into a story world. Gamified elements, such as chapter-based milestones and completion certificates, further enhanced engagement by rewarding exploration of real-world Irish locations associated with the series.

Equally significant was the application's capacity to blend real-world locations with a fictional narrative, illustrating Gyimothy et al. (2015) research detailing narrative layering. Feedback from potential end users during Focus Group 2 reinforced this point, with participants noting how the application's nostalgic humour, references, and character-driven content triggered personal memories. This connection between fiction and geography created a bridge between screen narrative and tourism.

Ultimately, *The Craggy Island Trail* demonstrates how transmedia storytelling can be applied within Irish film tourism to deepen narrative engagement and promote emotional connection. Thematic analysis of primary research following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2012) revealed that participants viewed location-specific storytelling and audiovisual content as key to enhancing their immersion and motivation to visit featured sites.

By aligning narrative content with interactive design, anchoring emotional cues in both character and Irish location, and enabling user-directed exploration, this approach fosters user satisfaction while also encouraging real-world visitation. The findings illustrate the potential of transmedia storytelling as a narrative and emotional engagement strategy within an Irish film-tourism context.

4.1.2 What multimedia elements should be prioritised when designing an application to foster film-tourist engagement?

This study's findings indicate that effective film tourism applications benefit significantly from the integration of multimedia elements that support narrative coherence, source content integration and familiarity, and interactive engagement. Drawing on both secondary literature and data from two focus groups, several multimedia components emerged as particularly effective in sustaining user attention and deepening emotional investment.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 1 highlights the importance of visual and auditory media in reinforcing narrative engagement. Volo (2021) identifies thematic audiovisuals and character-led content as key contributors to emotional resonance in digital tourism. Additionally, Keshavarz (2024) adds how maintaining narrative coherence and fidelity to the original material is important for developing transmedia storytelling experiences, as inconsistent or inauthentic adaptations can disrupt the user's connection to the story.

When integrated thoughtfully, these elements not only enhance the affective tone of a story but also anchor it in spatial contexts, aligning narrative content with locative experiences.

These priorities were confirmed in Focus Group 1, composed of seven design and multimedia professionals with experience in interactive technologies. Participants emphasised the value of location-specific content drawn from *Father Ted* episodes, suggesting that recognisable content serve as touchpoints for engagement.

Feedback from Focus Group 2 provided further detail on how multimedia features contribute to user engagement. Participants responded positively to the narrative consistency achieved through the integration of quotes, visuals, and character-driven humour. Features such as episode images, audio, and progress-based rewards were frequently cited as enhancing both enjoyment and emotional connection. Additionally, the structure and clarity of visual elements contributed to the application's perceived utility as a film tourism guide.

Taken together, the findings from both groups suggest multimedia priorities for applications designed to support film-tourist engagement:

- **Visual media and content linked to known locations and characters**, reinforcing recognition and connection to source content.
- **Interactive progression mechanisms**, including chapter-based interactivity, quizzes, and personalised rewards, which increase user investment and satisfaction.
- **Thematic consistency in style and humour**, using character tones and visual motifs to support engagement.

These components not only align with the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 1, including emotional design and narrative transportation, but also reflect user expectations as evidenced through primary research. Their combined application illustrates how multimedia design can effectively mediate between fictional story-worlds and real-world film tourism experiences.

4.1.3 How does transmedia storytelling influence film tourist emotional connection to the narrative experience and their overall engagement?

Transmedia storytelling can play an important role in enhancing both emotional connection and user engagement within film tourism applications. Literature highlights that transmedia narratives, when distributed across multiple media platforms, enable audiences to form sustained relationships with the story world (Jenkins, 2006; von Stackelberg & Jones, 2014).

Significantly, these theoretical insights were substantiated by the study's research in Focus Group 2, in which three potential application end users provided insight into how they interpreted and emotionally responded to the application. Participants described their experiences in terms of personal nostalgia and even cultural familiarity. The application's dialogue, character design, and visual elements were noted as evoking strong associations with the TV show, reinforcing emotional identification. Additionally, participants highlighted Irish cultural specifically, with one participant stating that "It's distinctly Irish."

The structure of the application further reinforced this engagement. Its episodic format mirrored the source material, offering a familiar narrative rhythm while encouraging progression. Participants expressed motivation to uncover each chapter's clues, with some suggesting further hidden content to extend the experience.

Moreover, the spatial dimension of transmedia storytelling was important. By embedding narrative elements within physical locations, the application enabled users to form a situated relationship with the story. The blend of fictional narrative and real-world geography created a layered experience which supported by Tussyadiah et al's work (2018) highlighted how embedded storylines, characters, and overlays foster engagement by transforming familiar sites into narrative landscapes.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that transmedia storytelling can meaningfully influence emotional and narrative engagement in film tourism by:

- **Integrating source material resonant humour and ambiance**, enhancing affective engagement
- **Structuring content through progression**, promoting sustained curiosity and exploration
- **Embedding narrative content in physical locations**, fostering a sense of spatial immersion and cultural connection

These outcomes illustrate how narrative coherence, spatial storytelling, and emotionally resonant content can work to enhance user experience and motivate real-world interaction.

4.2 Contribution to Practice and Theory

This study makes contributions to both professional practice and scholarly theory in the fields of interactive media design, transmedia storytelling, and film tourism, demonstrating how transmedia-based mobile applications can be designed to engage tourists emotionally and intellectually.

4.2.1 Key practical contributions:

Through iterative testing with multimedia design professionals and potential users, the study offers a replicable design approach for tourism applications that accommodates both creative storytelling and usability. The use of the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) and Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) frameworks allowed for structured evaluations of user experience and emotional resonance, enhancing the practical design process.

The application prototype illustrates the value of narrative-driven design in location-based contexts. By combining episodic storytelling, character continuity, and real-world spatial anchors, the application extends a fictional universe in a way that enhances user engagement. This strategy

aligns with best practices in transmedia design and can inform future applications that aim to fuse entertainment with location-based tourism.

In sum, this thesis provides actionable recommendations for designers, including:

- Prioritising location-based storytelling to enhance engagement.
- Incorporating interactive audiovisual content.
- Implementing gamified features to sustain user interest.
- Ensuring stylistic fidelity to the original media property.

4.3 Methodological Choices and Implementation Rationale

The methodological choices made during the development of *The Craggy Island Trail* directly shaped the tool's ability to address the research objectives, particularly the main research question: *How can transmedia storytelling be designed to enrich narrative-driven experience and emotional engagement in Irish film tourism?*

The decision to develop a web-based prototype reflected practical priorities of timescale, accessibility and maintainability within the academic scope, while also aligning with user needs identified in literature for low-barrier, device-independent access to locative experiences (Silva, Palmer, Nisi, & Straubhaar, 2018). By prioritising simplicity, implementation, and responsiveness, the application remained consistent with findings that ease of use and perceived usefulness are important to technology adoption in tourism contexts (Xiaohong & Lai, 2021).

A Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology (McKenney & Reeves, 2019) allowed comprehensive testing and refinement across development phases. This approach was particularly suited to the goals of the project, enabling integration of user feedback and supporting real-time validation of design decisions.

Focus groups were chosen as a research method because of their value in eliciting qualitative insights into narrative engagement, multimedia integration, and user experience. This approach allowed for exploration of how the application resonated emotionally and narratively with users, reflecting Von Stackelberg & Jones' (2014) conceptualisation of transmedia storytelling as a participatory, multi-platform experience. The two distinct focus groups, one of seven design and multimedia professionals and one of three potential end users, ensured that both professional critique and authentic user perspectives informed the results, supporting findings against theoretical models such as narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2024) and narrative layering (Gyimóthy, Lundberg, Lindstrom, Lexhagen, & Larson, 2015).

The methodological design therefore provided not just iterative feedback on usability and functionality but also enabled critical reflection on how the narrative, multimedia elements, and locative strategies aligned with the research questions. Focus group findings affirmed the effectiveness of narrative fidelity, humour, and spatial integration in fostering emotional engagement and situating the story in the Irish cultural context.

By embedding these methodological choices within an evaluative framework, the study was able to interrogate the relationship between design decisions and user experience in light of established theory and the stated research objectives. This critical perspective highlights both the strengths of the prototype, in blending narrative, multimedia, and place, and the potential for further exploration of how such applications can scale beyond proof-of-concept to broader audiences.

4.4 Application of Theoretical Frameworks

The integration of the Design, Dynamics, Experience (DDE) by Walk, Görlich, & Barrett (2017) and the Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) by Bilandzic et al. (2019) provided structured mechanisms to shape question design and data analysis. The DDE framework guided focus group questions to elicit feedback on the design, interface, and multimedia functionality, offering a balanced view of design and user desirability. Meanwhile, adapted NES questions facilitated deeper insight into emotional and narrative engagement, allowing thematic patterns to emerge in user feedback.

These frameworks helped to ensure that participant responses aligned with the project's research questions, thereby strengthening internal validity and enabling theoretical reflection on user experience design.

4.5 Participant Insights and Interpretation

Feedback from Focus Group 1 emphasised practical design concerns such as interface layout and stylistic coherence. This professional feedback shaped technical iterations and refined user experience touchpoints. Focus Group 2, composed of potential users, provided emotional and experiential insights, especially around humour, familiarity, and source resonance.

Participant interpretations highlighted the importance of direct references to known characters and story arcs. These observations confirmed the centrality of source fidelity and narrative authenticity in user satisfaction. Some participants proposed deeper branching narratives or opportunities for user choice, suggesting areas for future enhancement.

Conclusions

This thesis set out to explore how transmedia storytelling can enrich narrative-driven experiences and emotional engagement within Irish film tourism. Employing a Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology, the study progressed through four iterative phases, integrating theoretical insights, application prototype development, and structured user feedback. The resulting findings highlight the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling when combined with structured interactivity and locative technologies to create emotionally immersive, narrative-rich film tourism experiences.

Drawing on a robust body of literature, the study established the foundational value of narrative cohesion, emotional design, and spatial integration. Theoretical contributions from von Stackelberg and Jones (2014), Green and Brock (2024), and Gyimothy et al. (2015) informed both the conceptual framing, and development of the prototype. This included guidance on transmedia frameworks, emotional design, and locative storytelling. These principles shaped the design of *The Craggy Island Trail* from its earliest phases, beginning with the integration of episodic structure, character continuity, and site-based narrative delivery.

In Phase 1, these concepts were operationalised through the development of a narrative structure and prototype outline.

Phase 2 involved technical implementation, producing a usable version of the application aligned with design principles of clarity, interactivity, and character fidelity.

Phase 3 introduced the first round of user engagement through Focus Group 1, which was composed of seven multimedia design professionals, who emphasised practical design concerns such as interface layout and stylistic coherence. This professional feedback shaped technical iterations and refined user experience touchpoints.

Phase 4 included Focus Group 2, which was composed of three potential users, provided emotional and experiential insights, especially around humour, familiarity, and source resonance.

Key findings across the study confirm that multimedia elements, such as source authentic content, progress-based interaction, and locative design, are important for enriching narrative-driven experience, emotional engagement, and motivating site visitation. Participants cited

familiarity with characters and a personalised journey as part of their experience. Moreover, the application's progression, coupled with tangible rewards and embedded spatial cues, fostered sustained curiosity and interaction.

In response to the research questions, this study demonstrates that:

- **Transmedia storytelling**, when grounded in recognisable narratives and distributed through location-aware design, can foster emotional and cognitive engagement.
- **Multimedia elements**, including audio-visual cues, interactive progression mechanisms, and personalised content, are essential to achieving narrative engagement and supporting practical use.
- **Emotional design** plays a critical role in mediating familiarity, particularly when aligned with humour, dialogue, and visuals specific to the original media source.

Ultimately, this study illustrates how transmedia storytelling, supported by iterative design and user-centred methodologies, can bridge fictional narrative and physical environment to create engaging, emotionally resonant film tourism applications. *The Craggy Island Trail* not only represents a working prototype but also a transferable model for similar efforts.

Contribution to Theory

This study advances theoretical understanding at the intersection of transmedia storytelling, interactive design, and film tourism. This research contributes a practice-informed model that illustrates how narrative coherence, and emotional engagement can be fostered through structured, location-based storytelling.

Transmedia Storytelling in Mobile Tourism Design: The findings highlight how transmedia storytelling can be structured to support both narrative and emotional engagement in tourism environments. This study shows how interactive, narrative-driven design can be effectively applied to informal locations. The project illustrates how transmedia frameworks can be adapted to enhance visitor experiences in film tourism by integrating familiar story elements with real-world settings through accessible, location-based design.

Addressing Underdeveloped Engagement in Irish Film Tourism: Within the Irish tourism landscape, there remains a lack of study between the country's rich film heritage and its digital engagement strategies. This research responds to that opportunity by applying a design-based research approach to develop and evaluate an application prototype that integrates emotional design, locative interaction, and narrative framing to enhance film tourism experiences. In doing so, it offers a theoretically informed and methodologically transparent model that can inform future developments in Irish film tourism and comparable contexts.

By embedding these elements within a mobile platform, the study offers a blueprint that connects transmedia storytelling with real-world interaction. *The Craggy Island Trail* thus serves not only as a proof of concept but also as a case study illustrating the potential of using grounded

transmedia storytelling, locative, and interactive technologies, to enrich emotional engagement and emotional connection in a tourism context.

In conclusion, this thesis bridges theoretical insights with design practice, providing a framework for creating emotionally engaging and narratively coherent mobile applications for film tourism.

Implications for Future Research and Design

This study highlights important lessons for the ongoing development of narrative-driven applications in film tourism, combining insights from both the design process and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the project. These implications point to practical strategies for designers, content creators, and researchers working at the intersection of tourism, narrative, and technology.

User-Centred Design Practice: A key finding of this research is the value of sustained user involvement throughout iterative design stages. The Design-Based Research (DBR) process allowed for structured input from both, multimedia professionals, and end users, leading to improvements in features, narrative structure, progression-based content, engagement, and design and usability. Similar projects would benefit from embedding user input across all design and testing stages to ensure alignment to audience needs and preferences.

Content Strategy and Narrative Fidelity: The study also underscores the importance of narrative coherence and tonal fidelity when adapting fictional worlds into interactive formats. Participants consistently responded positively to references drawn from the original series, including dialogue, characters, and locations, which contributed to emotional engagement and enjoyment. Developers aiming to extend existing narratives should therefore prioritise maintaining consistency in tone, style, and humour to preserve the authenticity of the source material. Future work could examine how alternative narrative structures, such as branching storylines or user-generated content, affect visitor engagement and learning in similar settings.

Research Methodologies and Framework Integration: The structured use of the Design, Dynamics, and Experience (DDE) and Narrative Engageability Scale (NES) frameworks proved effective in structuring and analysing qualitative feedback, linking user experience directly to design decisions. Researchers in cultural and tourism contexts may adapt or build upon these frameworks to suit different types of interactive, narrative-driven experiences.

Recommendations for Transmedia Storytelling in Film Tourism Design and Research

This study offers a series of practical recommendations to inform the continued development of transmedia-driven applications in film tourism. These suggestions are rooted in the findings of *The Craggy Island Trail*.

Maintain Narrative Authenticity and Stylistic Consistency: For applications based on established fictional worlds, preserving the narrative tone and stylistic qualities of the source material is essential. In this study, integrating familiar characters, dialogue, and humour from *Father Ted* fostered emotional connection. Future designers should aim to create content that feels authentic within the established narrative universe, offering new avenues for interaction while respecting expectations.

Embed Location-Based Storytelling: Blending narrative progression with real-world geography proved highly effective in supporting immersive engagement. Mapping each chapter of *The Craggy Island Trail* to actual filming sites allowed users to experience the story world in situ, strengthening both spatial awareness and emotional connection. Future applications should consider how to leverage locative media to strengthen narrative engagement.

Offer Layered Multimedia Engagement: This research confirmed that visual assets and textual storytelling all contribute to a richer experience. Additional layers of multimedia content, such as episode images and character references, allowed deeper exploration. Designers should consider structuring content to accommodate a range of preferences.

Balance Gamification with Narrative Flow: Gamified elements such as certificates, progress indicators, and quizzes were well received, particularly when thematically integrated. Future applications should embed gamification in ways that complement the story rather than distract from it, ensuring that interactive rewards reinforce rather than undermine narrative depth.

Encourage Iterative Testing and Cross-Stakeholder Involvement: The involvement of both potential users and multimedia professionals throughout the design process was instrumental in application prototype development and insights. Future projects should embrace participatory design approaches, incorporating feedback from diverse stakeholders at multiple stages to ensure relevance.

In conclusion, transmedia storytelling in film tourism offers significant potential for enriching experiences by connecting visitors to narratives and places in emotionally meaningful ways. By prioritising narrative authenticity, locative engagement, and layered interactivity, future applications can strengthen the relationship between story, place, and visitor.

Limitations of the Study

While this research offers meaningful contributions to the design and theory of narrative-driven film tourism applications, several limitations must be acknowledged. These stem from methodological choices, the project's scope, and practical constraints, and they help frame directions for future research and development.

Sample Scope and Representativeness: A central limitation of this study concerns the size and composition of the focus groups. Focus Group 1 comprised seven multimedia design and multimedia professionals, while Focus Group 2 included only three potential end users. Although participants were purposefully selected for their relevant experience and familiarity with the *Father Ted* series and tourism, the small sample size limits the generalisability of the findings.

In particular, the small and specific composition of Focus Group 2 means that the insights around emotional resonance and cultural familiarity may not extend to wider audiences, such as international visitors or those less familiar with the source material. The study's findings therefore reflect a narrower user perspective than a representative cross-section of potential users. Future research would benefit from engaging larger, more diverse groups to test how robust the narrative and design remain across different demographic contexts.

Narrative and Content Constraints: While the application aimed to reflect transmedia principles, the narrative was constrained by its single-platform delivery and a relatively short development window. Although the design drew heavily from *Father Ted*, content expansion into richer multimedia forms, such as video, augmented reality, or user-generated content, was outside the scope of this project. This restricted the ability to examine how more complex or non-linear storytelling might sustain engagement over time.

The cultural specificity of the *Father Ted* series, while foundational to the app's affective appeal, also narrows the scope of audience interest. Future adaptations might consider more widely recognised narratives or the localisation of content for other audiences.

Time and Iteration Limitations: The fixed academic timeline of the project imposed further constraints. Design-Based Research (DBR) is iterative and benefits from long-term development cycles, yet only a limited number of iterations were possible in this study. While user feedback informed meaningful improvements between prototype versions, additional cycles could have enhanced content richness, technical stability, and feature depth.

Some compromises were also required due to time and resource constraints. The choice of a web-based prototype improved accessibility and ease of development, but limited access to device-specific capabilities such as precise geolocation or offline functionality. Future iterations could explore platform-specific features to deepen the experience.

In sum, while these limitations do not undermine the study's core contributions, they offer critical context for interpreting its outcomes. Further research could usefully expand user testing to larger and more diverse samples, explore cross-cultural applicability, and develop more technically advanced, multi-platform implementations.

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Bibliography

Appendices

The following appendices provide supplementary material, including focus group question guides, full transcripts, and the narrative script for The Craggy Island Trail application. These materials are included to enhance transparency and facilitate replication of the research design.

Appendix A: Focus Group 1 - Multimedia Professionals Questions

Warm-Up / Context Setting

1. What's your area of focus or interest in multimedia?
2. From your experience, what makes a multimedia experience emotionally engaging or memorable?

Design

3. From what you observed in the walkthrough, how well did the interface appear to support navigation and story progression?
4. Did the gamified elements (such as clues, progress bar, or story features) seem meaningful or in need of improvement, based on what you saw? How might these features better support user engagement?
5. What would you consider essential multimedia components for designing an application that supports film-tourist engagement, based on the walkthrough?
6. How effective did the application appear in terms of usability and accessibility, based on your observations?
7. Were there any parts of the design (e.g. colours, transitions, layout) that you feel might exclude or frustrate some users?
8. Were there any elements you noticed that you would remove, simplify, or redesign, based on how they appeared during the demonstration?

Dynamics

9. Based on your own expectations or preferences, what features would make this application more personally appealing or engaging for you?
10. What kinds of interactions or elements (e.g. mini games, AR features, show clips) do you think would enhance enjoyment or connection?
11. If you were using this application in real life, what would you want it to do more of or do differently?

Experience

12. Were there moments in the walkthrough where it looked like the story and interactivity worked well together or clashed?
13. How do you imagine a user might feel while using this application at a real-world location?
14. What types of user behaviour or unexpected reactions do you think could emerge when people use the app?

Appendix B: Focus Group 2 – Potential End Users Questions

Focus Group Questions

Warm-Up / Context Setting

1. What does *Father Ted* mean to you personally, and why do you think it remains such a cultural reference point in Ireland?
2. Have you ever been interested in visiting a location featured in a TV show or film? What motivated that interest?

Initial Impressions of the Trail (After Guided Run-Through)

3. After seeing the walkthrough of *The Craggy Island Trail*, how well do you think it captures the humour, tone, and essence of *Father Ted*?
4. How would you describe your emotional connection with the story world after the walkthrough? Example: *Were there moments that you particularly enjoyed or felt nostalgic?*
↳ (Adapted from NES: Emotional Engageability – Q4–6)
“Did you feel emotionally affected by any parts of the experience? Were there moments where you felt especially happy, nostalgic, or even sad?”

Narrative Engagement & Transmedia Design

5. How engaged did you feel with the narrative during the walkthrough?
↳ (Adapted from NES: Presence Propensity – Q1–3)

*“Did you find yourself mentally stepping into the world of the story, even briefly?
Can you describe that?”*

6. What particular elements of the application (choices, story, design etc) stood out as most effective in helping you feel involved with the story?
7. How did the inclusion of familiar moments, quotes, or characters from the show affect your connection with the experience?
8. ↳ *(Adapted from NES: Character Identification – Q5, Q6)*
“Did seeing familiar characters or quotes make you feel closer to the story or part of it?”
9. How would following a story like this on location change the way someone might experience a place of tourism?
10. Would experiences like this make you more curious to explore stories and locations from other films or TV shows?
↳ *(Adapted from NES: Suspense/Curiosity Propensity – Q7–10)*
“Did this type of story-driven experience make you want to learn more about the world or characters, or revisit moments from the show?”

Design & Interactivity Reflections

11. What design features or elements kept you interested during the walkthrough?
12. Were there any parts of the experience that didn’t quite work or took away from your engagement?
13. What features (mini games, quests, unlocking content, using clips from the show) would make this more interactive or personal to you?
14. Would you describe this type of experience as immersive? Why or why not?
↳ *(Adapted from NES: Ease of Accepting Unrealism & Being Engaged Despite Surroundings – Q11–16)*
“Even though this was a video walkthrough, were there any moments where you felt momentarily ‘in’ the world? What helped that happen?”

Wrap-Up / Feedback for Development

15. What suggestions would you give to improve the emotional impact or engagement of the trail?
16. Would you recommend this experience to other fans or tourists? Why or why not?

Appendix C: *The Craggy Island Trail Story*

The Story of the Holy Stone of Clonrichert

Chapter 1: The Discovery

The story begins at Father Ted's house, where a shocking discovery has been made. The Holy Stone of Clonrichert, which was being stored in a biscuit tin under Father Jack's chair, has mysteriously vanished. Dougal mentions seeing a "cool-looking priest" during the night. Ted, concerned that the iconic St. Kevin's Stump might be the thief's next target, decides to investigate.

Chapter 2: St. Kevin's Stump

At the famous rock where Ted and Dougal had their climbing adventure, they meet a local man who provides a crucial clue. He reports seeing a "young priest with an earring" listening to Oasis. The suspect fled when approached, but dropped a flyer for a "Pop-Up Priest Rave & Blessing Session" at Aillwee Cave. This modern, rebellious priest seems out of place in the traditional setting.

Chapter 3: Aillwee Cave

In the depths of Aillwee Cave, Ted and Dougal find Father Noel Furlong, who reveals that only one priest showed up to his rave and blessing session. This priest, complaining about "Frosty not being cool," threw a piece of paper at him - a receipt for cigarettes purchased in Kilfenora village. This receipt becomes a crucial piece of evidence in the investigation.

Chapter 4: Kilfenora Village

At Vaughan's pub in Kilfenora Village, Ted questions the bartender about the Holy Stone. The bartender recalls a priest who came in with a stone, claiming it was blessed and attempting to trade it for a leather jacket. The priest made a telling comment: "I'd rather throw it in the sea than give it back to those eejits." This statement reveals the thief's disdain for the traditional church establishment.

Chapter 5: The Cliffs of Moher

The trail leads to the dramatic Cliffs of Moher, where Ted and Dougal arrive too late. A crowd witnessed a priest throwing the stone into the crashing waves below. The priest has disappeared, but the pieces of the puzzle are coming together. Bishop Brennan is demanding answers, and it's time to identify the culprit.

The Final Quiz

After completing all chapters, players are presented with a quiz to identify the thief. The options are:

- Father Damo
- Father Noel Furlong
- Father Jack Hackett
- Pauline McLynn
- Father Tom

The correct answer is Father Damo, the "cool" priest who was seen listening to Oasis and had the modern, rebellious attitude that clashed with traditional church values. His actions throughout the story - from the initial theft to the final act of throwing the stone into the sea - demonstrate his rejection of traditional religious artifacts and practices.

Appendix D: Focus Group 1 Transcript

Speaker 1

I'll give you a walkthrough of the application, and then I want to ask some questions about usability, design, and accessibility. Thanks for taking the time and agreeing to participate.

So basically, the story is—

Speaker 1

The Holy Stone of Clanrecord has mysteriously disappeared, and Bishop Brennan demands answers. This story will guide the user from location to location. People familiar with the series should find it easy to follow and quite relatable. They should also know the answer by the end of the trail, as the user will be prompted to identify who stole the stone.

The settings page includes volume control, text size adjustment, and a disclaimer—very simple. Then the trail progress is tracked by following the stone to 100% completion, with each completed trail contributing to the overall percentage.

Chapter One starts at Father Ted's house, introducing the journey. The story begins with Ted waking up to find the stone missing, with only an empty biscuit tin and a suspicious priest remaining—a hint to the thief.

The application should automatically record the user's location, though testing this from Portugal is difficult, which is a limitation. To address this, I added buttons with all locations listed, including "Get Directions," which links to Google Maps, and an "I'm Here" button to confirm arrival. Users can visit locations in any order but are guided sequentially.

A local man reports a young priest with an earring listening to Oasis, another clue, with additional location details.

Speaker 2

How long does it take to get from one place to another?

Speaker 1

It depends. The first location to the second is about 30 minutes, while from the fourth to fifth is longer, around 40-45 minutes. It takes a while to complete the whole trail but can be done in one day.

Speaker 1

locations are quite rural, which may be interesting for those unfamiliar with rural Ireland, as this village is not a typical tourist destination. That can be appealing for visitors looking for

something authentic. The trail finishes at the “eclipse moment,” which was a notable scene in the show.

At the end, users are prompted to guess who stole the stone, with an option to share their answer.

Speaker 3

Can you restart it? For example, if you want to give it to someone else the next day on the same phone?

Speaker 1

Yes, if you close the application fully, it restarts from the beginning. Did I cover everything correctly? Is there anything else?

Speaker 4

The “I’m Here” part isn’t very clear. It’s not clear where the endpoint or start point is.

Speaker 1

Okay, that makes sense. The “I’m Here” feature needs clarification.

Speaker 5

On Android, you can use mock location apps to simulate your position, like a VPN for location data. It might be helpful for testing from other countries.

Speaker 1

Thanks, I’ll look into that.

Speaker 5

Yes, you need data all the time for this to work.

Speaker 1

I’m using the Design-Desire-Emergent framework, which structures the focus group into three sections.

Speaker 1

What’s your area of focus or interest in multimedia?

Anyone want to start?

Speaker 5

Content creation

Speaker 4

video editing,

Speaker 2

Music,

Speaker 3

Audio and visual design

Speaker 1

From your experience, what makes a multimedia experience emotionally engaging or memorable?

Speaker 2

If I feel an emotional connection, whether through an app, video, or sound, it engages me—maybe through nostalgia or curiosity.

Speaker 1

Anyone else? What do you think makes a multimedia experience engaging?

Speaker 6

I agree, and I'd add story is important.

Speaker 3

For me, engaging multiple senses is key, music, visuals, and even physical elements like in immersive cinemas.

Speaker 6

Unexpected or surprising elements can also enhance my engagement.

Speaker 1

From what you observed in the walkthrough, how well did the interface appear to support navigation and story progression?

Speaker 5

Yes, but it might be helpful to have a map showing all points—like point A to B—so users see the whole trail at once.

Speaker 2

The progress bar on the first page is nice, but I lacked understanding of where I was on the full trail, and how long it would take and like a whole trail, understanding of the whole path through all these points. Okay, as I must ask, like, for how long it's gonna take? It was unclear for me at first, because, like, is it gonna take three days or one day, or,

Speaker 4

Yes, a full trail overview with a “you are here” marker would help.

Speaker 5

Also, the progress bar isn't smooth enough; it doesn't clearly show progress between steps.

Speaker 7

Did you see the images? I liked them.

Speaker 1

So the progress bar supports story progression, but the trail length and difficulty should be clearer.

Speaker 4

Many trail apps indicate difficulty levels and duration for walking, cycling, or driving.

Speaker 1

That's good feedback; it's a driving trail.

Speaker 4

I initially thought it would be a walking trail.

Speaker 5

Maybe between locations A and B, there could be points of interest or guidance to enrich the journey. There could be something in between, for example, as as, for example, as a guidance, yeah, or, for example, on the left, you can see some kind of that and maybe add some value, if you could, you know, make places of interest to stop along the journey.

Speaker 1

Did the gamified elements (such as clues, progress bar, or story features) seem meaningful or in need of improvement, based on what you saw? How might these features better support user engagement?

Speaker 2

There was a lack of storytelling between points. It would be good to have audio guides or more content to enhance the experience.

Speaker 2

Basically, there's nothing to do. Maybe, like, you can have an audio guide while you're in a place like you can see their house of this character, and you can see there, I don't know, farm that they were shown in some episodes, like some more substance

Like even screenshots from the movies, yeah,
okay. Or even clips, or, Oh yeah,

Speaker 5

Audio guides could be triggered by geolocation to provide relevant information as users move through the trail.

Speaker 2

And maybe there could be, not only like historical information on this audio, but maybe, like, some interesting facts about episodes that were filming there. Like, for example, this house was, I don't know, already created for this episode. Including interesting facts about filming locations or episode trivia could deepen engagement by connecting history and series content.

Speaker 1

Breaking the trail into smaller sections for different modes of transport would help tailor the experience. So there's different time you can spend on this way. So I think it makes more sense to have this story at the point, like audio guide. So in this audio guide, yeah, you can use like, all kinds of information about the place, Okay, anyone else,

Speaker 2

Yes, audio guides can include information relevant to each location, catering to different travel speeds.

Speaker 1

What would you consider essential multimedia components for designing an application that supports film-tourist engagement, based on the walkthrough?

Speaker 8

A camera feature that encourages users to take photos at filming locations to unlock content or clips would be engaging.

Speaker 5

A shared user gallery could showcase what others have experienced.

Speaker 5

Integrating Google Maps and scraping images from reviews could enrich the application without heavy hosting requirements.

Speaker 1

How effective did the application appear in terms of usability and accessibility, based on your observations?

Speaker 5

It was generally easy to use, though some features could enhance usability further. Such as bigger headings or better fonts.

Speaker 1

Were there any parts of the design (e.g. colours, transitions, layout) that you feel might exclude or frustrate some users?

Speaker 8

Some screens used inconsistent fonts, and fancy fonts were harder to read when used for longer texts.

Speaker 4

Fancy fonts work well for titles but simpler fonts should be used for body text.

Speaker 5

Handwritten-style fonts might enhance titles without sacrificing readability.

Speaker 1

Was there any clash between text and background colors?

Speaker 4

No, the background was fine.

Speaker 1

Were there any elements you noticed that you would remove, simplify, or redesign, based on how they appeared during the demonstration?

Speaker 5

Nothing for me other than what we said previously.

Speaker 1

Based on your own expectations or preferences, what features would make this application more personally appealing or engaging for you?

Speaker 5

A reward system could enhance engagement—such as certificates or badges after completing the trail, which users can personalize and share on social media.

Speaker 4

I was thinking that if you're offering a reward, it could be connected to the whole series, since fans will already be familiar with it. To engage them, you could make it interesting by including something fun, like an AI voice of the priests saying something. That could add some entertainment value.

And then people can say it in the story, so as a form of a reward, so more people be aware of that. Okay, it's like some kind of reward at the end, not just like a traveling but, you know, once they finish the journey, like, you know, you can generate there may be personal, something personal to them, maybe adding their photo or name or certificate or something, something like tangible, yeah, tangible, like, they can share it on the Instagram or something like that.

Speaker 1

Anything else?

Speaker 1

What kinds of interactions or elements (e.g. mini games, AR features, show clips) do you think would enhance enjoyment or connection?

Speaker 2

I think we've answered this already, unless anyone has anything else to add.

Speaker 1

If you were using this application in real life, what would you want it to do more of or do differently?

Speaker 3

More features and more clarity and it would be more interesting for me.

Speaker 1

Were there moments during the walkthrough where the story and interactivity worked well together, or where they clashed?

Speaker 4

There was a slight lack of information.

Speaker 1

For example, there's a section describing the location and another telling the story. Did that cause any confusion?

Speaker 5

Maybe you could add a clearer label on top of the image, like "You need to be here" or something more explicit.

Speaker 2

Perhaps the app could send notifications when you reach a point. For example, if I'm using the app and traveling the trail, it would be helpful to get reminders or alerts about nearby locations, so I don't forget to check in or proceed.

Like checkpoints or reminders while on the trail.

Speaker 1

How do you imagine a user might feel while using this application at a real-world location?

Speaker 5

Maybe they'd take photos or listen to an audio guide.

Speaker 3

From a technical perspective, I'd be concerned about battery usage, especially with GPS and notifications.

Speaker 8

Will the app have geolocation features?

Speaker 1

Yes, I believe so. It should detect when you arrive at a location automatically, though I haven't fully tested it yet.

Speaker 8

It would be cool to have an interactive map, similar to Pokémon Go, with features like points of interest.

Speaker 5

Is this a full-day event? If so, people might want to eat along the way. From a monetization standpoint, you could partner with local restaurants to offer discounts or referral bonuses through the app, which would support local business and make the app more sustainable. Incentives for local businesses and users could enhance the experience.

Each trail could have a few partnered restaurants to provide discounts, adding value beyond just travel.

I'm hesitant about handling money directly, but a referral system with unique codes for discounts could work well.

Speaker 1

Good suggestion.

Speaker 1

What types of user behaviour or unexpected reactions do you think could emerge when people use the app?

Speaker 5

Some users might stop midway due to illness or time constraints, extending the trail over multiple days.

The app could include emergency contacts or local services for safety.

An emergency button with important contacts would be helpful.

Also, users might download the app in advance, so it would be good to include preparatory information, such as accommodation options or travel recommendations.

Planning features would help users organize their trip better. Okay, so like, recommendations for users, maybe, maybe some explanation about, like, how it's gonna be, like, you're gonna it's

gonna take one day. For example, you can go by bike or by car. By car, it's going to take this amount of time. By bike, it's going to take this amount of money, so, For example, explaining how long the trail takes by bike, car, or on foot would be useful. This information could be placed before starting the trail or in a separate section. There could also be info about hospitals or emergency services. This is probably more useful before or after the trip rather than during it.

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you all very much. I appreciate your time.

Appendix E: Focus Group 2 Transcript

Speaker 1

Okay, thanks everyone for taking part. The aim of this research is to better understand how interactive storytelling and transmedia tools, such as the application you're about to see, can be used effectively.

The *Craggy Island Trail* is designed to enhance visits to filming locations associated with *Father Ted*, enriching them through an interactive and engaging experience. This is part of a broader objective to enhance the *Father Ted* tourism experience.

I'll now share my screen.

This is the application I've been developing, called the *Craggy Island Trail*. Your feedback—whether positive or critical—is highly valued. This is a group discussion, so please feel free to speak openly. There are no right or wrong answers, only your honest thoughts and experiences. The session will be recorded to ensure accuracy, and all comments will remain confidential and anonymised in the final analysis. You are free to skip any questions or pass if you feel uncomfortable.

I'll now walk you through the app.

I've aimed to keep everything styled around *Father Ted*, from the typography and music to other creative elements. In my most recent focus group, participants suggested including more than one trail type. Originally, the application was limited to a cycling trail, but I was advised to include three: a cycling trail, a driving trail, and a hiking trail. Completing the hiking trail over three days would be quite extensive, so for this demonstration, we'll choose the car option.

Before we get into the main story and guide, I'll show you some of the app's settings. These were suggested by the previous group and include the ability to change text size, reset the trail, and view a disclaimer.

The story begins with a mystery: a shocking discovery has been made at Father Ted's house—the Holy Stone of Clonrickert has mysteriously vanished. The only evidence is Father Dougal's vague recollection of seeing a "cool-looking priest" during the night. Bishop Brennan demands answers. Can you help Father Ted recover the missing Holy Stone?

The application guides users through five chapters, starting at the parochial house and continuing to the Cliffs of Moher. The route varies depending on whether the user is cycling or driving. It should take a full day by car or around three days by bike.

We begin at Father Ted's house, the iconic parochial house where Ted, Dougal, and Jack lived. The story begins with Ted discovering that the Holy Stone—previously stored securely in a biscuit tin under Father Jack's chair—has vanished. Only an empty tin remains. Dougal remembers seeing a “cool-looking priest,” although he admits he might have dreamt it.

Nearby amenities, accommodation, and points of interest are listed. A map is provided, and selecting “Directions” opens Google Maps to assist navigation.

At the end of each chapter, you simply click “Finish Chapter.”

Next, we proceed to St Kevin's Stump. Although we know where we're headed, this feature helps keep the storyline cohesive. This should be a good place to start looking for the culprit.

At St Kevin's Stump—if you recall, this is where Ted and Dougal were caught watching a woman sunbathe—Ted finds a flyer wedged in the stump. It advertises a “Pop-Up Priest Bravery and Blessing Session” hosted at Aillwee Cave, which becomes the next location.

Moving on to Aillwee Cave. These caves are very dark—almost pitch black—and in real life they feature signage from the relevant episode. Ted and Dougal get lost in the cave, but Dougal finds a receipt near the entrance. Someone may have asked to use a bin. This clue leads us to the next location: Kilfenora.

As you complete each chapter, the progress bar for the Holy Stone fills up.

Kilfenora Village is our next stop, famously associated with the character Pat Mustard. Inside Vaughan's Pub, Ted asks the bartender if he has seen the Holy Stone. The bartender shrugs and replies, “Yeah, a priest came in this morning with some kind of stone. Claimed it was blessed and tried to trade it for my leather jacket. I said I'd rather throw it in the sea than give it to those eejits.”

There are five optional points of interest in this section. Users aren't required to visit all five, but they provide context and add depth. For instance, Mrs O'Reilly's house, where Pat Mustard visited; Vaughan's Pub; and sites from other memorable episodes, such as the Chinese episode and the sheep raffle.

Then comes the Cliffs of Moher. Ted and Dougal arrive breathless, but they're too late. A crowd is already gathered to witness a priest throwing the Holy Stone into the sea. The priest disappears. Bishop Brennan calls—he wants answers. Who stole the Holy Stone of Clonrickert?

Upon completing the trail, users are presented with two options: they can share the application with others or receive a digital certificate. If completed by car, one certificate is issued; a different one is awarded for completing the cycling version.

So yes, at the end you get a certificate.

Speaker 1

So this is the certificate—you can see it, right? Yes? So this is the one you receive upon completing the trail by car. If you complete the trail by bike, you receive a different certificate.

This feature was suggested by participants in the previous focus group.

Do you have any questions before we begin the main discussion?

Speaker 2

No, it looks really cool. I'd love to do it.

Speaker 3

We should all do it this summer. That would be lovely. Should we cycle it or drive?

Speaker 2

Drive.

Speaker 1

What does Father Ted mean to you personally, and why do you think it remains such a cultural reference point in Ireland?

Speaker 2

I think it's because it's timeless and deeply nostalgic. No matter where or when you watch it, you immediately understand the context—the mannerisms, the humour. I think everyone in Ireland knows a "Father Dougal", a "Father Jack", or a "Father Ted". It hasn't aged in a way that makes it irrelevant. It remains current.

Speaker 4

Absolutely, and it's such a part of people's lives—especially from childhood. I remember being in fifth or sixth class in Caherdaniel and watching *Father Ted* on national television. I probably didn't understand all of the references, but I still enjoyed it. Now, as an adult, I still watch and enjoy it just as much. That's why it endures—it's never going to disappear. Someone, somewhere, is always watching it.

There's also the fact that Ireland was a deeply Catholic country. Priests were highly respected and rarely questioned. Our mother, who left Ireland at a time when no one criticised priests, returned to find that we now use humour to poke fun at the Church—and also at politics. Everyone knows the line "That money was only resting in my account," which refers to real political scandals—Charlie Haughey, and later Bertie Ahern. The show's humour captured that context, and the politics it parodied are still relevant.

It also depicts universal Irish experiences: like the couple who fight constantly but pretend to be loving when others are watching. Everyone knows that couple. As Sean said, we all recognise the characters—it's deeply embedded in Irish culture and humour.

Speaker 3

I agree. For me, it's all about nostalgia. We all grew up watching it. It's distinctly Irish—from the mannerisms to the one-liners and the cultural references. That line, "The money was only resting in my account," is iconic. There are so many moments that still resonate, even in the age of memes. The humour helps it persist and reach new audiences. It's particularly

meaningful to Irish people because of how closely it's tied to our culture and history. The application brings that out and lets others engage with it as well.

Speaker 4

It's also a testament to how people consumed television at the time. *Father Ted* aired on RTÉ 2 at 9 pm on Mondays. It was before Netflix, before streaming. You'd sit down and watch it if you were allowed to stay up, and you'd run to make tea during the ads. Then you'd go to school the next day proud to say you'd watched it.

That communal experience doesn't exist in the same way now. While there are still large-scale shows like *Game of Thrones*, which was also filmed in Ireland, and *Desperate Housewives*, the culture of smaller, low-budget shows with cult followings has diminished. *Father Ted* had room to be more irreverent—it's definitely not 'woke'. Its humour is politically incorrect and often crass, but that's what made it brilliant. It simply couldn't be made in 2025.

Speaker 2

And to build on that—people often forget that *Father Ted* wasn't made by an Irish broadcaster. It was produced by the BBC. You could question whether it was intended to mock Irish Catholicism and rural life. But despite that, many prominent Irish entertainers participated. They made it their own—it became great television.

It was simple humour, but profoundly effective. Every country has something similar—like *Little Britain* in the UK, pushing the boundaries of humour and inviting people to laugh at themselves. When *Father Ted* was first released, it definitely provoked criticism, especially from older generations who believed priests were off-limits. But if the BBC hadn't commissioned it, I doubt RTÉ would have ever had the budget or freedom to produce it.

Speaker 1

Thanks so much.

Have you ever been interested in visiting a location featured in a TV show or film? What motivated that interest?

Speaker 4

I have visited this part of Clare, but it was initially for a sporting event. It was only because I had a reason to be in the area that I ended up visiting the Father Ted house and the Cliffs of Moher. The Cliffs of Moher are definitely a major tourist draw, but once you explore the smaller coastal villages in Clare, you realise how genuinely stunning the area is. It's very remote and hard to access—narrow back roads and a bit of a trek even by car—but it is absolutely worth it.

It always struck me that while American tourists flock to the Cliffs of Moher, the nearby villages aren't promoted nearly enough. I stayed in a cottage owned by the man who ran the event I attended, and I found it to be one of the most beautiful places I've seen in Ireland. It felt like stepping into a postcard from 50 years ago. Everything caters to tourists, but still retains a charm. So yes, I think if these places were highlighted more—especially through TV shows that

appeal to multiple generations—they could really boost tourism and encourage more exploration.

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you. Have you ever travelled somewhere like Dubrovnik specifically because of *Game of Thrones*, or any other filming location?

Speaker 2

I don't think I've ever gone somewhere specifically because it was used as a filming location for a show or movie I've watched. I've been to the Cliffs of Moher, but that was as a child and not because of *Father Ted*. I didn't even make the connection at the time.

Speaker 4

I went to Paloma Beach in the south of France because it featured in the second *Fifty Shades of Grey* film. They weren't filming at the time, but the beach is quite popular. Jamie Dornan is Irish, and a few of us were curious to see the spot where a key scene was filmed. To be fair, it was just a short 20-minute drive. I wouldn't travel far solely for that reason, but if it's convenient, yes.

I haven't been to a filming location just for that reason, but I would—especially something like the Craggy Island house. It's quite iconic in Ireland. Word of mouth and social media really help to promote places like that. The fact that others are doing it definitely increases its appeal.

I'd also be more inclined to visit a filming location if the experience was structured, like what you've designed with this app. Personally, I like planning an itinerary—I want to know exactly where I'm going and where I'll eat. I don't just want any coffee; I want a good coffee. I like knowing the details in advance, including drive times and meal stops.

One practical suggestion: if the app could include charging points—especially Ionity stations—for electric vehicles, that would be really useful. That part of Clare is very remote. If you're cycling, the same logic applies. It's a huge area, and you don't want to get stuck.

Speaker 3

I'd also suggest listing local bike shops or adding a disclaimer. You'd need to bring spare tubes, a pump—things like that. The weather in the west of Ireland is famously unpredictable. You need to be ready for sunshine and rain, sometimes within the same hour. Bring a jumper, factor 50, and a hat. It's just that kind of place.

Speaker 1

That's great, thank you.

After seeing the walkthrough of the Craggy Island Trail, how well do you think it captures the humour, tone, and essence of Father Ted?

Speaker 2

I think it's great. It really felt like something Dougal might have written himself, in the best way possible. It captured his kind of humour and tone. I loved the reference to the "cool priest."

Speaker 1

By the end, did you guess who the culprit was?

Speaker 3

Yes, it was the guy who was also in *Killinaskully*. I can't remember his character's name—Jimmy, maybe? He played Father Damo, the one who smokes, with the earrings. Father Frost? He was the one who got electrocuted. He's my favourite.

Speaker 1

How would you describe your emotional connection with the story world after the walkthrough? Example: Were there moments that you particularly enjoyed or felt nostalgic?

Speaker 2

I really liked the image of the Pat Mustard van. It reminded me of watching *Father Ted* at my grandmother's house. I remember wondering whether the bomb on the milk float was going to explode. At the end of that episode, when they finally say Mass, the line "Oh, I hate Mass" just killed me.

There was another scene where they make Ted watch a movie. He says, "This didn't help me at all. It just wasted two and a half hours." That kind of absurd humour really stuck with me.

Speaker 3

Yes, that's the one that really made me laugh. It brought back great memories.

Speaker 4

For me, it's the house. And Mrs Doyle constantly offering tea, even when no one wants it. And Father Jack in his chair. The house itself is just so familiar—like a classic rural Irish farmhouse. There's a house on the road to Grangemouth Cliff, past Ballyneill, that we always called the Father Ted house. That type of house is synonymous with Irish culture. It's the show's most recognisable emblem.

Speaker 1

So how engaged did you feel with the narrative during the walkthrough?

Speaker 3

Yes, I could follow it, and I think the way it's written is very effective. You get Dougal's vague memory and then these little humorous touches, like the reference to the "cool-looking priest" or the line about the Holy Stone being "kept securely in a biscuit tin." Those bits of humour really keep you engaged. It plays out like a story the whole way through. You think you're about to solve it, but then the guy in the pub gives some information—says he saw the stone—but then he's gone. It pulls you along really nicely.

Speaker 1

Anyone else?

Speaker 4

Yes, I think the narrative flows really well. It's very consistent with the tone of the show. The use of terms like "eejits" and the idea of not wanting to give the stone back to "those eejits" really captures that *Father Ted* feel. Even the religious element—the weight placed on a holy

stone in Irish culture—resonates well, whether you’re religious or not. That cultural connection adds depth.

Speaker 1

What particular elements of the application—choices, story, etc.—stood out as most effective in engaging you?

Speaker 3

The visuals were a big one. The progress bar for the Holy Stone was a clever touch—you could see it moving as you went along. The colour scheme also worked well. Each chapter was initially marked in blue, then turned green when completed. If one was left incomplete, it turned a sort of awful orange. If it were me, I’d definitely want to complete everything just to avoid that orange! It creates a motivation to continue.

Also, there’s a sense of structure—there are tasks, objectives, and then a reward at the end, like a certificate. That framing helps keep you engaged from chapter one through to chapter five.

Speaker 4

I found it really engaging too. The font worked well, and the flat palette made the text easy to read. I also liked the progress tracker for the Holy Stone—it’s something I hadn’t seen before, and it genuinely made me want to do the trail, get in the car, and visit the locations and cafés.

The app really simplifies planning a trip. You don’t have to search separately on Google Maps; everything’s there. It’s informative and keeps you in the app. It’s similar to what you’d find on Fáilte Ireland or AllTrails—a clear trajectory with objectives. And for someone like me who prefers a set itinerary, that structure is really appealing.

Speaker 1

How did the inclusion of familiar moments, quotes, or characters from the show affect your connection with the experience?

Speaker 2

For me, the use of the characters and their phrases—the little nuances and contextual understanding of the show—definitely evoked nostalgia. I haven’t watched *Father Ted* since I was about 12 or 13, but I still felt an immediate connection. The narrative is really what made it most engaging, particularly the lines like “eejits” and the “cool priest”—those elements resonated strongly.

Speaker 1

How would following a story like this on location change the way someone might experience a place of tourism?

Speaker 4

I think it really would. When you’re actually there, you can point to places—the stone, the gate where your man said, “I hear you’re a racist now, Father”—and associate them with specific quotes or episodes. Each area brings up a different memory or conversation about the show, and that encourages deeper exploration.

It's like visiting a place you've never been, but it feels familiar—like going to your grandmother's house. You've never been there before, but somehow, it's deeply connected to your past.

Speaker 1

Would experiences like this make you more curious to explore stories and locations from other films or TV shows?

Speaker 2

Yes, definitely. It gave me direction and something to follow. It was informative and guided me along, so I felt more engaged.

Speaker 1

Tara, would you agree?

Speaker 4

Oh, absolutely. A few years ago, I went to Derry and, without planning it, ended up connecting the Derry walls and graffiti with the *Derry Girls* series. It gave me a deeper connection to the city because I loved the show. I think the same applies here. The difference is that in this case, you're provided with a perfect itinerary. That kind of structure is really helpful for tourists—not just in terms of engaging with the culture and people, but in practical terms. Many visitors want to know where to find good coffee, breakfast, how long something will take, and ideally have a Google Maps link. Everyone wants that. There's nothing more frustrating than getting a vague location without a proper link.

Speaker 1

What design features or elements kept you interested during the walkthrough?

Speaker 3

The combination of the storyline and the visuals. Every time Dougal was mentioned—like “Dougal vaguely remembers”—it made me smile. The connection between quotes, characters, images, and the overall storyline really pulls you in. It leads you along the trail while evoking those nostalgic memories.

Speaker 4

I'd add that the layout was important—particularly where text is positioned. We all want information quickly, so having everything visible without too much scrolling helps a lot.

Speaker 1

Were there any parts of the experience that didn't quite work or detracted from your engagement?

Speaker 4

Possibly the font size on the title pages—it could be slightly larger. That's the point where you're being drawn in, so it should stand out. That said, I loved the images and graphics—they really captured the humour and tone of the show well.

Speaker 1

What features—like mini games, quests, unlocking content, or show clips—could make the experience more interactive or personal?

Speaker 3

The ability to share your certificate straight to social media would be great. Visibility is key—if I knew this was an option, it would really motivate me to go. The more people who see it, the more interest it will generate.

Speaker 1

Scott, do you have any input?

Speaker 3

Yes, adding points on the map with images or notes about famous scenes would be great. For instance, at Craggy Island house, you could mark where someone said, “I hear you’re a racist now, Father,” or the spot where Bishop Brennan was kicked. You could include short clips or GIFs for these scenes.

That might encourage visitors to reenact the scenes—someone could pose like Bishop Brennan, or recreate the “women were in the nip” moment. It would add a fun, shareable element.

Also, it would be interesting to include some behind-the-scenes facts. People don’t realise how few episodes were filmed or that it wasn’t shot on an island but in Clare. British audiences in particular might not know that. A page about the actors’ later careers—like Graham Norton, who was hilarious in the caravan scene—would also be valuable. He’s probably the most famous person from the show.

Speaker 2

Yes, maybe an extra button or page with additional information—about the show, the actors, little-known facts. Things die-hard fans would really appreciate.

Speaker 3

Even quirky details, like how little the actors were paid or how quickly the show was filmed. Fans love those insights.

Speaker 1

Would you describe this experience as immersive? Why or why not?

Speaker 3

Absolutely. The landscape of County Clare lends itself really well to this kind of experience. Whether you’re driving or cycling along the Cliffs of Moher, the scenery is stunning. That adds to the immersion.

I’ve only had a similar experience once, when I hiked to Pulpit Rock in Norway—a setting from a *Mission Impossible* film. A setup like this would work there too, but not everywhere. Some places just aren’t worth the trip. In this case, the landscape enhances the experience, and the structured itinerary makes it even better. It’s not just the show—it’s the setting that draws you.

Speaker 1

Sean, do you have anything to add? The question is: would you describe this type of experience as immersive, and why or why not?

Speaker 2

Yes, to echo Tara's point—before this discussion, I had really wanted to visit the Father Ted house, like Scott mentioned. But I wouldn't make the whole trip to Clare just for that. It's something I'd like to do, but I'd need another reason. Like, I plan to go to Bruges partly to see the landscapes featured in the film *In Bruges*. This experience really highlights what we're missing by not engaging with the immersive side of Craggy Island and the cultural weight the show carries.

I'm like Tara in that I like an itinerary. If I'm abroad for a competition, for example, I want to know where I can get lunch or coffee before heading to the venue. I want to plan in advance.

Speaker 4

Yes, and this takes all the pressure out of planning a tourist trip, but still keeps the excitement. You're following a map and going from A to B to C, but you're not worried about missing anything. It's all laid out for you. And because you're specifically interested in Father Ted-related sites and moments, it's tailored to your interests. There's even an element of mystery since you don't know exactly what's coming next in each chapter—but you do know it'll be something Father Ted-related, which keeps it intriguing.

On a deeper level, the reason we travel is to connect with different cultures. This offers a novel way to do that—blending cultural engagement with an immersive, guided itinerary. And it's not just for international tourists. Even Irish people experience different cultures across the country. Clare's culture differs from Dublin's, for example. This app allows you to explore that nuance.

Speaker 3

It's immersive because you're literally there. And to follow on from Sean's point, it would help to have famous moments at each location. That way, even someone less familiar with the series can see where specific events happened.

Adding a section called "Famous Moments" with quotes, images, or clips would help. Something brief between chapters to say, "This is the gate where he said this," or "This is where the raffle happened." It ensures nothing gets missed.

Speaker 4

I'd also suggest a quiz at the end—something that asks, "Who stole the Holy Stone?" with characters like Father Damo or Bishop Brennan as options. It would give the experience a proper resolution and make it more engaging for both long-time fans and newcomers.

Speaker 1

Great suggestions—thank you all.

Speaker 2

Yes, a quiz is a great idea. Even something simple like a multiple-choice format would work well. For example, "Was it a super cool priest?" If yes, that could point to someone like

Father Damo. If not, maybe Bishop Brennan or another character like Father Stone. Then you could ask, “Does he smoke?” leading to Father Jack or Father Damo. Or “Was the money resting in his account?” which might point to Father Ted. Using memorable references from the show would make it a fun and thematic way to reveal the culprit.

Speaker 1

Perfect. Thanks, everyone. Just two final questions now.

What suggestions would you give to improve the emotional impact or engagement of the trail?

We’ve touched on this a bit already, but any further thoughts?

Speaker 2

Adding more famous quotes and moments would help people connect the locations with the episodes. Like recognising the spot where “the women were in the nip” or where Father Jack was found. That recognition makes people laugh, take photos, and share the moment, which adds to the experience.

Speaker 3

Maybe you could include clip art or digital stickers—like the milk float or “hairy baby” face—that users could use as photo backdrops. So if someone’s at the Cliffs of Moher, they could take a selfie with a themed overlay. Or stand outside the house next to a character like the one wearing the “I shot JR” shirt.

Speaker 4

Yes, the concept of clip art or digital stickers is really simple but effective. It makes the experience interactive and shareable. A Father Ted quiz is another great idea. I think that would appeal to everyone. People love that kind of thing.

Speaker 1

Would you recommend this experience to other fans or tourists? Why or why not?

Speaker 2

Yes, definitely. We’ve covered a lot, but to summarise—it’s fun, nostalgic, and informative. Even if someone isn’t a fan at the start, they’ll learn something new about the genre, the show, and the area. It has a strong emotional pull.

Speaker 4

I completely agree. What I love is that you’re handed a full itinerary based on something you already care about. It removes the disappointment that sometimes comes with random tourist spots where there’s not much to do. Here, there’s a story, an objective, and a sense of accomplishment. For example, I’m a huge *Gossip Girl* fan, and I’ve always wanted to sit on the steps of the Met in New York because of that show. If there was a similar trail for *Gossip Girl*, I’d do it in a heartbeat.

The Burren also suits this concept really well because of its beauty. It’s not just one destination, but multiple points of interest linked together with a narrative. That makes it a full-day experience with lots of variety.

Speaker 4

On a side note, I've also been to a set in New York—Serena van der Woodsen's apartment from *Gossip Girl*. So I get the appeal. The connection between a show and real-world locations can be really powerful, and this concept taps into that brilliantly.

Appendix F: The Craggy Island Trail – Final Prototype Imagery and Wireframe

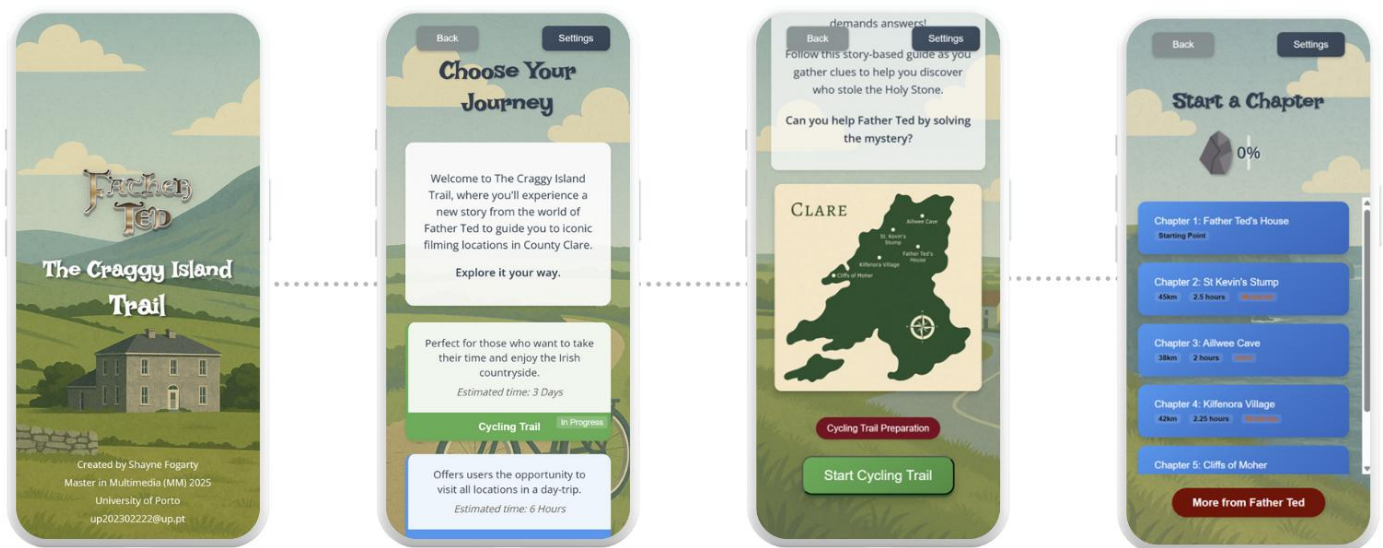


Figure 15: Final Prototype Introduction and Chapter Select

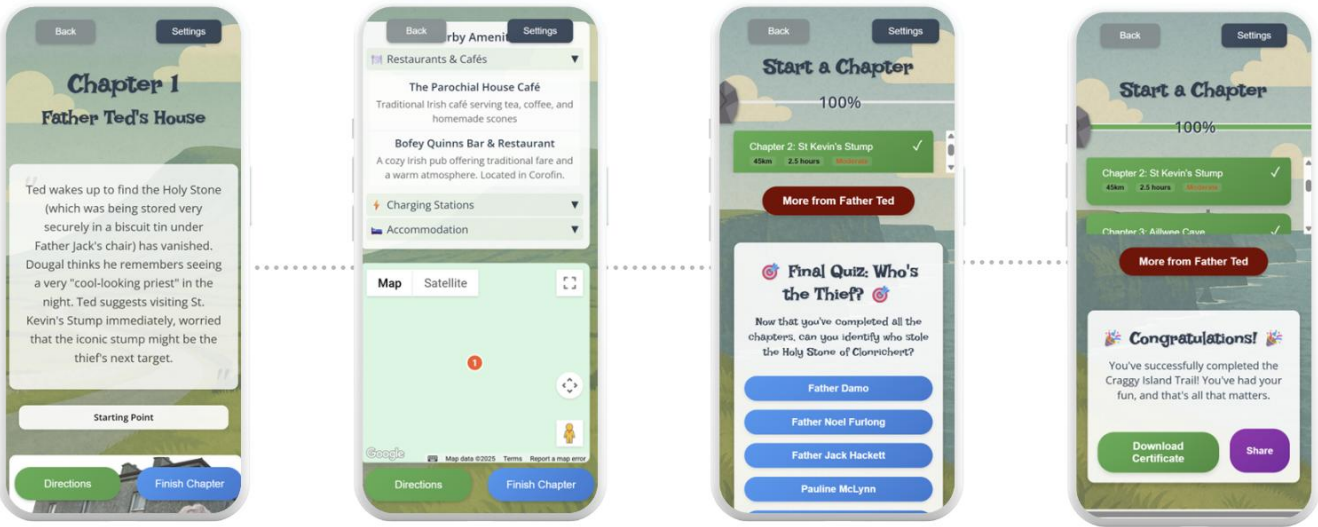


Figure 16: Final Prototype Trail Completion

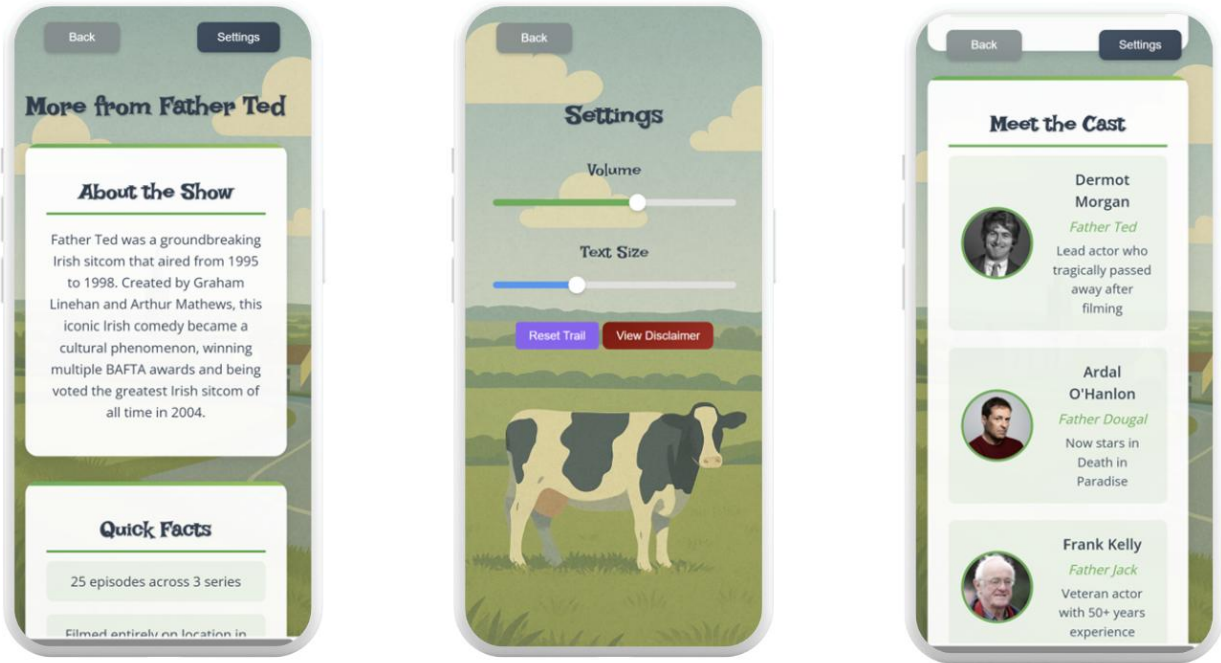


Figure 17: Final Prototype Miscellaneous Pages